

**FAMILY OF ORIGIN ATTACHMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON NEW
RELATIONSHIPS**

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**BY
MARVIN HUGLEY**

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ABBREVIATIONS

ESV*	English Standard Version
EFT	Emotionally Focused Therapy
HIV/STD	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Sexually Transmitted Disease
NKJV	New King James Version
UCLA	University of California Los Angeles

*All scripture is taken from the ESV except where indicated otherwise

ABSTRACT

The impact of family is rooted deeper than many realize. Family of origin serves as the training ground for a person's infant through adolescent years. The time comes when a person leaves his or her family of origin and forms new relationships, but do people truly leave behind their family of origin? This thesis-project examines the evidence that suggest that people take into a new relationship many influences from their family of origin. While people do physically leave their family of origin, they mentally and emotionally take their family of origin with them into new relationships. In other words, people enter new relationships with behavioral patterns, systems of beliefs, and expectations that are formed in their family of origin and will continue to manifest in the new relationships. Researchers use attachment theory to explain this concept. Attachment theory suggests that during the years of living with their family of origin, people develop mental representations called internal working models which guides how they understand the world, self, and others. As a result, many issues in adult relationships, such as marriage, can be traced back to family of origin; which, then, can be treated based on the understanding of attachment.

CHAPTER 1

FAMILY AND ATTACHMENT

Family Influence

We are all born into a family. We are born into a family that we do not choose and one that does not choose us. Yet, the family we are born into is one of the greatest influencing factors in our lives. Family forms an environment of socialization in which family members evolve, shape their personality, and acquire values. The family environment is where family members also develop attitudes and opinions on various subjects such as politics, society, social relations, self-identity and personal desires (Rani, 2014). For this reason, it should come as no surprise that some sons want to be like dad, while some daughters want to be like mom due to parental influence. Some younger siblings also want to be like their older brother or sister due to sibling influence. Family really does have a hold on us from the food we like or dislike, to the type of clothes we wear, to the core beliefs we develop, habits we form, decisions we make and much more. It can be said that an individual is stuck on family and family is stuck on an individual. Subsequently, we take our family of origin with us everywhere we go including into any new family that is established by our relationships such as marriage. There is an impact on the new family, but to what extent? Many of the influences from an individual's family of origin often become the expected standard of norm in the new family. Therefore, it is crucial to understand how an attachment to family of origin concepts, patterns (of thinking and behavior), structures, and hierarchy impact other relationships such as a new family. Insight in this area will not only explain negative outcomes in

family relationships, but also predict them which in turn might make it possible to prevent them.

The Evolving Definition of Family

The starting point for understanding family of origin influences is understanding the definition of family. In other words, who can be in the family? Are step-siblings who visit once per year family? Family is not a simple term to define due to the fact that families are as different as the individuals in the family. According to Hanson and Lynch (2013), families cannot be narrowly defined because families are not unitary. Families are multidimensional. The differences between families can be described in almost every imaginable way including size, membership, sociocultural and socioeconomic status, language, cultural, racial and ethnic identification, beliefs, values, and traditions. Families can also be distinguished by how they organize to accomplish the day-to-day routines and requirements of family life. What this means is there is no one-size-fits-all definition for family. Depending on the person, organization, event, or purpose, the definition of family may vary.

One example of the evolving definition of family can be found on the Census report from the U.S. Census Bureau. Historian David Pemberton (2015) traced the definition of family on the Census report back to the 1800s. Starting with 1860, the definition of family on the Census instructions stated:

By the term 'family' is meant either one person living separately and alone in a house, or a part of a house, and providing for him or herself, or several persons living together in a house, or part of a house, upon one common means of support

and separately from others in similar circumstances. A widow living alone and separately providing for herself, or 200 individuals living together and provided for by a common head, should each be numbered as one family. (para. 8)

Ten years later in 1870 eating together was added as a defining element in the definition of family. The new definition stated: “Under whatever circumstances, and in whatever numbers, people live together under one roof, and are provided for at a common table, there is a family in the meaning of the law” (Pemberton, 2015, para. 9). By the 1900 Census, the definition had evolved even more. It stated:

The word family has a much wider application, as used for census purposes, than it has in ordinary speech. As a census term, it may stand for a group of individuals who occupy jointly a dwelling place or part of a dwelling place or for an individual living alone in any place of abode. All the occupants and employees of a hotel, if they regularly sleep there, make up a single family, because they occupy one dwelling place. (Pemberton, 2015, para. 5)

The 1920 Census offered a new definition:

The term ‘family’ as here used signifies a group of persons, whether related by blood or not, who live together as one household, usually sharing the same table. One person living alone is counted as a family, and, on the other hand, the occupants or inmates of a hotel or institution, however numerous, are treated as a single family. (Pemberton, 2015, para. 4)

The 1930 Census reworded the definition of family to read: “Persons related in any way to the head of the family by blood, marriage or adoption are counted as members of the family” (Pemberton, 2015, para. 2). The U.S. Census Bureau’s definition of family has

not had a major rewording since 1930. At the time of this writing, the most current Census report is the 2010 Census report. It states, “A family consists of a householder and one or more other people living in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage or adoption” (Pemberton, 2015, para. 1).

Pemberton (2015) shows that before 1930, the U.S. Census Bureau defined family as either one person or multiple people living in a house. The definition evolved to include people not only living together in a house, but also making common provisions for food. Further edits to the definition more clearly defined the members of the house as being either blood relatives or non-relatives. In 1930 the definition evolved to eliminate a single person and non-relatives as being considered family. Since 1930 family has been defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as two or more people living in the same house who are related in a genetic or legal way. DeGenova, Rice, Stinnett, and Stinnett (2010) correctly note that “according to the Census Bureau, if adult children move out of their parents’ household and establish families of their own, they are no longer considered a part of their parents’ family” (p. 2).

These same authors also note that other definitions for the word “family” have been proposed:

Winch (1971) defined the family as “a set of persons related to each other by blood, marriage, or adoption and whose basic societal function is replacement.”

But this definition seems to limit family functions to child rearing. Burgess and

Locke (1953) defined the family as “a group of persons united by ties of marriage, blood, or adoption; constituting a single household; interacting and communicating with each other in their respective social roles (husband and wife,

mother and father, son and daughter, brother and sister); and creating and maintaining a common culture.” This definition would eliminate those cohabiting, though not legally related or married. It seems to assume as well that individuals in a family must conform to some sort of prescribed social roles.

(DeGenova et al., 2010, p. 2)

The authors confess that the definitions they cite from others do not cover all types of family situations.

Types of Family Structures

The definition of family gets more complex when we talk about family structures. For many people the idea of family is much broader than just genetic or legal relationships. Each person has his or her own definition of family that is influenced by the type of family in which he or she was raised. Hanson and Lynch (2013) suggest that individuals have a personal mental picture or image that is associated with the word family. This personal image is typically shaped by one’s own family of origin. For this reason, anyone seeking to understand family of origin influences must take into consideration the various types of family structures in our society.

“Americans until recently thought of only one type of family when they thought of the family at all, and that is the nuclear family: a married heterosexual couple and their young children living by themselves under one roof” (Barkan, 2011, p. 501). Schaefer (2012) argues, “The term nuclear family is well chosen, since this type of family serves as the nucleus, or core, on which larger family groups are built. Most people in the United States see the nuclear family as the preferred family arrangement” (p. 283). The nuclear family is also called the traditional family. This type of family structure has

traditionally been portrayed on television shows like *Leave It to Beaver* in the late 50's to early 60's. Barkan (2011) explains,

The 1950s gave us *Leave It to Beaver* and other television shows that depicted loving, happy, "traditional" families living in the suburbs. The father worked outside the home, the mother stayed at home to take care of the kids and do housework, and their children were wholesome youngsters who rarely got into trouble and certainly did not use drugs or have sex. (p. 499)

As the family structure in America has become more diverse, the nuclear family has been declining. Schaefer (2012) admits that only about a third of the nation's family households fits this family structure. Families composed of marriage couples with children at home has decreased steadily over the past 40 years and is expected to continue shrinking.

In recent decades, single-parent families have become more common in the United States because of divorce and births out of wedlock. Many single-parent families begin as (two-parent) nuclear families that dissolve upon divorce/separation or, more rarely, the death of one of the parents (Barkan, 2011). According to DeGenova et al. (2010) "a single-parent family consists of a parent (who may or may not have been married) and one or more children" (p. 3). Schaefer (2012) adds that "although 84 percent of single parents in the United States are mothers, the number of households headed by single fathers more than quadrupled from 1987 to 2011" (p. 294).

"A family in which relatives - such as grandparents, aunts, and uncles - live in the same home as parents and their children is known as an extended family" (Schaefer, 2012, p. 283). In other words, the extended family consists of multiple generations in a

single household. What distinguishes the extended family from the traditional family is the presence of multiple adults in the household who are not parents of the children. Yet, the extended family members may take on a similar role as the parents including sharing the responsibilities for providing for the whole family either financially or in other ways. Schaefer highlights this point by saying,

The structure of the extended family offers certain advantages over that of the nuclear family. Crises such as death, divorce, and illness put less strain on family members, since more people can provide assistance and emotional support. In addition, the extended family constitutes a larger economic unit than the nuclear family. If the family is engaged in a common enterprise – a farm or a small business – the additional family members may represent the difference between prosperity and failure. (p. 283)

Approximately 45 percent of all people in the United States will marry, divorce, and remarry again. The rising rates of divorce and remarriage have led to an increase in blended families also known as step families (Schaefer, 2012). In this family structure, one or both parents have children from a previous relationship which they bring together to form a new family (DeGenova et al., 2010). It should be noted that parents in a step family may or may not have children together. Schaefer (2012) warns that studies suggest that children raised in families with stepmothers are likely to have less health care, education, and money spent on their food than children raised by biological mothers. The same is true for children raised with stepfathers, but to a lesser degree than with stepmothers.

“One notable trend in the evolution of the family in recent decades is the dramatic increase in the number of children living in grandparent-maintained households” (DeGenova et al., 2010, p. 13). According to Kresak and Gallagher (2014), custodial grandparents or grandparent caregivers (also known as skipped generation) are defined as adults who have primary responsibility for their grandchildren younger than 18 years of age on a full-time basis. These “skipped generation” family units, where grandchildren and grandparents live together with neither parent present, have become the most rapidly increasing living arrangement among contemporary families in the U. S. and elsewhere. The authors explain that grandparents assume full-time custodial care of their grandchildren for a multitude of reasons including: (1) maternal substance abuse and the often resulting child maltreatment; (2) parental death; (3) incarceration of the biological mother; (4) mental illness of a parent; (5) abandonment; and (6) early teen pregnancy. In chapter 4 of this thesis-project, the case study will introduce a family that includes a member whose family of origin is a skipped generation or custodial grandparent household.

DeGenova et al. (2010) state that researchers have become increasingly interested in the same-sex relationship form which constitutes gay and lesbian families. According to Schaefer (2012), “an analysis of the 2010 census shows about 600,000 gay households, and a gay and lesbian adult population approaching 10 million” (p. 299). Same-sex couples cannot conceive together; therefore, they use various methods to have children including anonymous sperm donors, arrangement with a surrogate birth mother, adoption, and family blending when one member of the couple has a biological child from a previous relationship (Meezan and Rauch, 2005). DeGenova et al. (2010) argue that

most children in lesbian families were born into the context of a heterosexual relationship between the biological parents; and after leaving the heterosexual relationship, some mothers eventually enter a relationship with another woman who may or may not act as a stepparent to the children.

The family structures listed in this section does not represent an exhaustive list. It should also be noted that each family structure listed includes children; however, Schaefer (2012) notes that childlessness has increased moderately in the United States. More and more couples today choose not to have children and regard themselves as child-free rather than childless. They do not believe that marriage is an automatic first-step to having children, nor do they feel that having children is the duty of all couples. DeGenova et al. (2010) provide a definition of family that takes into consideration the family structures discussed in this section:

A family is any group of persons united by the ties of marriage, blood, or adoption, or any sexually expressive relationship, in which (1) the adults cooperate financially for their mutual support, (2) the people are committed to one another in an intimate, interpersonal relationship, and (3) the members see their individual identities as importantly attached to the group with an identity of its own. This definition has a number of advantages. It includes a variety of family structures: the traditional married couple with or without children, single-parent families, families consisting of blood relatives (such as two widowed sisters, a grandparent and grandchildren, and a multigenerational extended family). It also includes persons not related by marriage, blood, or adoption who have a sexual

relationship: an unmarried cohabiting couple, a gay or lesbian couple, a group marriage, a communal family. (p. 2)

Models of Family Power

An area of consideration when seeking to understand family of origin influences is the power structure in the family. “The concept of power is important to an understanding of family relationships,” says Balswick and Balswick (2014, p. 273). The question is sometimes asked in casual conversation between couples: who wears the pants in the family? The person asking the question, whether jokingly or seriously, is inquiring about power. In other words, the person does not literally want to know about pants, but rather wants to know which member of the family holds the power. In a group setting, some individuals might be more prone to dominate than others. Take, for example, people who are placed in a group without someone being designated as the leader. What might happen is someone in the group will assert their authority and assume the position of power. If there is more than one person who attempts to seize the scepter of power, then a power struggle ensues. The same holds true for the family group. Someone in the family holds the position of power. It is important to know who that someone is because he or she is the person with the most influence. Balswick and Balswick (2014) define power as “the ability of one person to influence or to have an effect on another person’s behavior” (p. 273). Their definition of power indicates that they understand that the person of power in the family decides the rules and regulations and principles and practices that governs the family. This, in turn, helps to define who we are and who we are not, how we view the world, how we live, and how we share our lives with others (Hanson and Lynch, 2013).

Balswick and Balswick (2014) present four basic models of family power. The first model is the patriarchal model. In this model, the husband is the head of the family and exercises authority over the wife and children. There are cultural and religious versions of this model. In the traditional cultural version, the wife willingly submits to the authority of her husband even if she earns more money than her husband. On the other hand, dictatorial rule is the norm in some extreme cultural versions. The husband gives orders to his wife and children as he sees fit. Any challenge to his authority may lead to possible retribution. In an extreme authoritarian Christian version, the husband holds absolute power over his wife and children much like the dictatorial rule of the extreme cultural version. The difference being the insertion of God in the chain of command which goes as follows: children are to submit to their father and mother, the wife is to submit to her husband, and the husband is to submit to God. Although this extreme Christian version is patterned from biblical principles, what has not been adopted is the biblical concept of mutual submission between husband and wife and fatherly affection for his children. In a less authoritarian Christian version and more biblical version, the husband follows the example of Christ by being a servant leader who is willing to suffer for the sake of his family just as Christ served and suffered for his church. Although a servant leader, the husband still has the authority of making decisions and assigning responsibilities in the family. In this way, the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church.

The second model is the democratic exchange model. In this model, one person having sole authority based on position is rejected in favor of the power residing in the family unit as a whole. In theory, every member of the family has an equal voice. The

way it works is every family member has the opportunity to express himself or herself and take part in the planning or decision-making process for the family. Yet, in practice, power is often held by the family member who has the most resources. For example, a husband, wife, and children may all freely contribute to the discussion of the location and activities for the family vacation. If multiple choices are presented with no unanimous consensus reached, the top income earner in the family may have the final say so as to where the family vacations and what activities will be involved. In other words, achievement, resources, or other factors are used to determine who has the most power in the family which means that power can shift between members of the family based on the determining factors.

The third model is the self-interest model. In this model, every member of the family attempts to exercise authority in the family. The needs of the family as a whole are not considered, neither are decisions made for the benefit of the family unit. The prevailing attitude for this model is every person for himself or herself. Therefore, only the needs of the individual are considered and decisions are made for the benefit of the individual. As can be imagined, a home operating under this model can be chaotic for at least two reasons. First, individualism does not promote unity which means family members will experience separation rather than unity. Second, individualism does not promote support which means family members will stand in opposition of one another rather than in support of one another.

The fourth model is the empowerment model. In this model, family members who have power are expected to use their power to build up those family members who do not have power. The idea is to develop power in another person by encouraging the

person to reach his or her full potential. Balswick and Balswick (2014) warn that empowerment does not mean that the strengths of the one who has power must be reproduced in the one who does not have power, but that there is a willingness on the part of the one who has power to build up the other and a commitment to not control or keep the other dependent. What can make family power so significant is that the power structure from our family of origin may continue to be influential even when we form a new family.

Family in the Bible

Society has its say about family, but so does the Bible. What the Bible says about family must also be taken into account when seeking to understand family of origin influences and their impact. There is a biblical model for family. The triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – is the pattern for the human family. Human beings are created in God’s image and one of the ways we reflect his image is through our relationships. Balswick & Balswick (2014) agree stating, “Family relationships are analogous in human form to this divine model. As the three distinct persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – mutually indwell a Trinitarian fellowship, so are family members to mutually indwell a family relationship in similar ways” (p. 5). The book of Genesis tells us that God created the first family by taking a rib from Adam’s side and creating for him a helper that was comparable to him. God joined the man and the woman together in marriage making them one flesh, thus creating the first family. Genesis provides the first definition of family: “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24, NKJV). What we have in Genesis 2 is a family in its simplest form. The family structure consisted of a husband

and a wife which is known as the childless family. A couple of chapters later in Genesis 4, we are told about the expansion of the first family. Genesis 4 starts out by saying, “Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, “I have acquired a man from the Lord.” Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel” (Genesis 4:1-2, NKJV). The birth of children resulted in the first family becoming a nuclear or traditional family consisting of two parents and one or more children. From this first family, many new families were formed, thus populating the earth.

In Genesis 6, God decided to destroy every living human being because wickedness had become the normal practice for every person throughout the earth. Yet, we are told in Genesis 7 that God preserved the human race through a family. Genesis 7 says, “So Noah, with his sons, his wife, and his sons’ wives, went into the ark because of the waters of the flood” (Genesis 7:7, NKJV). When the flood was over and the waters receded, the earth was repopulated through Noah’s family. The first time the earth was populated, it was through Adam’s family. The second time the earth was populated, it was through Noah’s family. The Bible teaches that the earth will be destroyed again and a new heaven and a new earth will be created. All those who will live on the new earth will be members of a family – the family of God. The teaching of the gospel is that through Jesus Christ human beings can become adopted members of the family of God. The Bible says in John 1, “He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:11-13, NKJV). Salvation incorporate the concept of family. Believers through faith in Christ join the family of God which is experienced in

part through the church in present reality, but will be experienced in full through eternal life with God in future reality. From beginning to end, the Bible speaks in the language of family. The original earth was populated by a family. The earth was destroyed by a worldwide flood, and it was repopulated by a family. The earth will be destroyed again to make way for a new heaven and new earth which will be populated by a family – the family of God.

The Bible also provides a model of family power. The biblical model of family power is a patriarchal model. The role of each family member is clearly defined within the patriarchal model. The husband or the man is the head of the wife. The pattern given for this arrangement is Christ being the head of the church (Ephesians 5:23, ESV). This means that the man is the head of his family. As the head of the family, he is to love his wife just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her. He is also to love his wife just as he loves his own body (Ephesians 5:25, 28). When it comes to his children, he is not to provoke his children so that they become angry or discouraged; instead, he is to raise his children with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). The husband is described as not only being the authority figure in the family, but also as being a servant leader who is willing to suffer for the sake of his family. He also uses his position of power to encourage his children to reach their full potential. The wife or woman is to submit to her husband's leadership and authority as the head of the family. She is to accept the submissive position as long as her husband leads his family in the ways of the Lord. She is also to respect her husband (Ephesians 5:22, 33). Children are instructed to obey their parents. This is such an important part of family order that it is contained in the Ten Commandments. Honor your father and mother is the

first commandment with a promise. If you honor your father and mother, things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth. (Ephesians 6:1-3). As we have seen, the theme of family runs throughout human history in the Bible from the first family, Adam and Eve, to the family of God who will live throughout eternity on the new earth. The Bible shows concern for order and power in family relationships; therefore, instructions are given for relationships between husband and wife and between parents and children (Balswick & Balswick, 2014).

Family Therapy: Theories

Barkan (2011) suggests that the family can be a source of conflict for its own members. Many families are far from the harmonious, happy groups depicted in the 1950s television shows. Instead, they argue, shout, and use emotional cruelty and physical violence. Balswick and Balswick (2014) describe family problems as follows:

Family conflict can be individual (i.e., between two family members) or collective (i.e., between two sets of family members). Individual conflict can arise within a family subsystem (e.g., between a husband and a wife) or between subsystems (e.g., a father in conflict with a son). Collective conflicts can occur between family subsystems (parents, against children) or irrespective of subsystems (e.g., mother and daughter in conflict with father and son). Extend-family conflicts involve parents and their children and children's spouses or children. Thus, multilevels may need to be addressed. (p. 252)

According to DeGenova et al. (2010), when conflict is disruptive and negative, change is needed. They suggest the following:

Conflict theory is useful in describing and understanding family conflict as members struggle for ascendancy and power. Conflict theory begins by asserting that conflict in families is the normal state of affairs and that family dynamics can be understood by identifying the sources of conflict and the sources of power.

What do family members fight about? Who wins, and how and why? What can be done about the conflict? The issue is not how to avoid conflict, but how to manage it, deal with it, and resolve it. (p. 23)

How does a family resolve any conflict that rears its ugly head? Initially, they may try to fix the problem on their own. If they are unsuccessful, another option is family therapy. The goal of family therapy is to help family members resolve conflict by promoting understanding and collaboration. “Strong families are not those that never experience conflict but those that successfully manage conflict when it does arise” (Balswick and Balswick, 2014, p. 252). While individual therapy is an option for members of a family, it focuses more on internal factors as a means of changing behavior. An approach is needed that will help the individual members of the family by taking into account the family as a whole.

A psychiatrist by the name of Dr. Murray Bowen introduced an approach called Family Systems Theory. “Bowen began to think of the family as an “emotional unit” and to provide treatment that took the entire family and its functioning into account” (Creech, 2015, p. 69). Bowen’s theory describes how the family, as a multigenerational network of relationships, shapes the interplay of individuality and togetherness (Nichols, 2013). In other words, family systems theory views families as a system of interconnected and interdependent individuals, none of whom can be understood in isolation from the

system. Therefore, the best way to understand individuals is not in isolation, but rather as a part of their family which is an emotional unit. Kerr (2000) explains that individual members of a family are intensely connected emotionally. As such, they influence other members of the family in profound ways including their thoughts, feelings, and actions to the degree that it seems as if everyone in the family are living under the same emotional skin. Members of the family seek each other's attention, approval, and support. They also react to each other's needs, expectations, and negative emotions. This connectedness and reactivity makes the functioning of family members interdependent. If one person changes how he or she functions, it is sure to effect change in the functioning of others in the family.

Family interaction is highlighted in Object Relations Theory, which stresses the importance of the mother-infant relationship in personality development. Bedi, Thornback, and Muller (2013) state,

A fundamental assumption within object relations theory is that the quality of children's interactions with caregivers is internalized. Over time, these internalizations form templates that provide children with an internal processing system that influences the way they perceive, relate to, and experience themselves and others in the world. (p. 233)

According to Flanagan (2011), Object relations theory has a three-fold focus: (1) on the interactions that individuals have with other people; (2) on the processes by which individuals internalize those interactions; and (3) on the role these internalized object relations play in psychological life. Therefore, it is important to understand that the term

object relations not only refer to real relationships with others, but also to the internal mental representations of others and to internal images of self as well.

Object relations theory addresses the absolute, primary need for attachment which is the primary focus of attachment theory (Flanagan, 2011). Attachment theory was originally developed by John Bowlby (1969/1982) and expanded by Mary Ainsworth (1969) and others. Bowlby believed that our lives, from the cradle to the grave, revolve around intimate attachments. “Attachment is the strong, affectionate tie we have with special people in our lives that leads us to experience pleasure and joy when we interact with them and to be comforted by their nearness in times of stress” (Berk, 2010, p. 150).

Attachment theory suggests the following: First, human beings are wired to connect with one another emotionally, in intimate relationships (Snyder, Shapiro, & Treleaven, 2012). Clinton and Sibcy (2002) emphasize the relationship aspect in their definition of attachment as an overarching system that explains the principles, the rules, and the emotions of relationships including how they work, how they don’t, and how we feel when we’re with the ones we love the most. Second, there is a powerful influence on children’s development by the way they are treated by their parents, especially by their mothers (Snyder et al., 2012). Bowlby’s research led him to the conclusion that the earliest bonds formed by children with their caregivers have a tremendous impact that continues throughout life. A strong attachment to a caregiver provides a necessary sense of security and foundation. Generally speaking, children without a strong attachment are fearful and less willing to seek out and learn from new experiences. On the other hand, children with strong attachments tend to be more adventurous and eager to have new experiences (Bowlby, 1973). Third, a theory of developmental pathways can explain

later tendencies in relationships based on such early experiences. Children's earliest relationships, often with their mothers, are considered by attachment theorists to create a template that may possibly shape their future relationships (Snyder et al., 2012).

The central theme of attachment theory is that mothers who are available and responsive to their infant's needs establish a sense of security in their children. Bowlby believed that attachment was an all or nothing process; but Ainsworth, using a procedure known as the "Strange Situation," showed that there are individual differences in attachment quality. In this procedure the child is observed playing while caregivers and strangers enter and leave the room, recreating the flow of the familiar and unfamiliar persons in the lives of most children. Wallin (2007) comments that "Ainsworth's greatest contribution to attachment theory was her detection through the Strange Situation of three distinct attachment patterns each of which was associated with a correspondingly different pattern of mother-infant interaction in the home" (p. 18).

The first attachment pattern is secure attachment. Secure babies will explore when they feel safe and seek comfort when they do not. When distressed by separation, secure infants are almost immediately reassured by reconnecting with their mother and readily resumes play (Wallin, 2007). The second attachment pattern is avoidant attachment. Avoidant babies are unmoved by their mother's departure or return. Their lack of distress or indifference indicates an absence of attachment behavior (Wallin, 2007). The third attachment pattern is ambivalent attachment. Wallin (2007) describes this attachment pattern as follows:

Ainsworth's research identified two kinds of ambivalent infants: those who were angry and those who were passive. Both were too preoccupied with mother's

whereabouts to explore freely and both reacted to her departures with overwhelming distress - so much so that separation episodes frequently had to be interrupted. Upon reunion, those infants categorized as angry oscillated between active overtures for connection to mother and expressions of rejection – ranging from leaning away from mother’s embrace to full-blown tantrums. By contrast, the infants classified as passive appeared capable only of faint or even implicit bids for solace, as if too overcome by their helplessness and misery to approach mother directly. Unhappily, the reunions seemed neither to ameliorate the ambivalent infants’ distress nor to terminate their preoccupation with mother’s whereabouts. It was as if – even in her presence – these infants were seeking a mother who wasn’t there. (p. 20)

Mary Main, a doctoral student of Ainsworth, introduced a fourth attachment style known as disorganized attachment. According to Wallin (2007),

Main has hypothesized that disorganized attachment results when the attachment figure is simultaneously experienced not only as the safe haven but also as the source of danger, that is, when the child – preprogrammed to turn to the parent in moments of alarm – is caught between contradictory impulses to approach and avoid. (p. 22)

Disorganized attachment can be understood to emerge from the child’s interaction with parents who are frightening, frightened, or dissociated (Wallin, 2007).

Attachment in New Relationships

The theories discussed in this chapter agree that a person’s identity is formed in the family of origin. Balswick and Balswick (2014) add that “in our families, we acquire

the majority of our attitudes, beliefs, and values. What we believe our parents think of us shapes our self-concept” (p. 76). The time comes, however, when a person leaves his or her family of origin to establish independence or a new family unit through marriage. Balswick and Balswick (2014) argue that “people are not ready for marriage until they have clearly differentiated themselves from their parents” (p. 76). This means individuals must establish an identity separate from their family of origin. When this is properly done, individuals are both connected to their family while at the same time separated socially and psychologically (Balswick and Balswick, 2014). Differentiation of self does not diminish family-of-origin influences. Research indicates that family-of-origin influences impact our new relationships, especially romantic relationships. According to Bretherton and Munholland (1999), an individual’s family-of-origin experience is thought to be predictive of future relationship attachments made by that individual. Knapp and Norton and Sandberg (2015) describe the positive and negative impact of family-of-origin influences. Positively speaking, they state that couples who experience secure attachment from their family of origin experience more happiness, friendship, trust, endurance, satisfaction, and commitment than couples who experience other attachment behaviors. Negatively speaking, they state:

Negative family-of-origin experiences influence individuals’ future romantic relationship trajectories in a number of ways. For example, the occurrence of stressors such as family conflict, violence, hostility, and parental divorce contributes to damaging couple stress responses in the future. Such responses to stressors may include negative self and partner attributions, poor communication, physical aggression, marital hostility and, ultimately, marital discord and even

divorce. Married couples experiencing these negative responses to stress may be able to trace roots of these potential problems back to family-of-origin influences. (p. 130)

Bowlby developed the concept of internal working models to explain the impact that early attachment relationships have on subsequent relationships. Internal working models are mental representations that consist of expectations about the self, about others, and the relationship between self and others. Internal working models are formed during the early relationship between infant and caregiver, and continue into childhood and beyond. As a result, internal working models influence thoughts, feelings, and behavior in adult relationships (Pietromonaco and Barrett, 2000). For example, if an individual has been treated well by his or her caregiver, he or she will have a good feeling about self and expect to be treated the same way by others. On the other hand, if the individual has been treated unfairly by the caregiver, he or she will have a negative feeling about self and expect to be treated unfairly by others. Fraley and Shaver (2000) explain that working models of attachment continue to guide and shape close relationship behavior throughout life. As people build new relationships, they rely partly on previous expectations about how others are likely to behave and feel towards them, and they use these models to interpret the goals or intentions of their partners.

Internal working models suggest that family-of-origin influences and experiences not only have an effect on the ways individuals think and behave in relationships, but also on the ways they attach meaning to their own and their partner's characteristics and behavior (Gardner, Busby, Burr, & Lyon, 2011). The mental picture of our attachment relationships are with us throughout our lifetime. They influence our behavior,

prompting us to feel anxious, happy, sad, or confused. They are more than just cognitive images; they are emotional blueprints, and physiological patterns of responding in our relationship with others (van Eecke, Chope, & Emmelkamp, 2006). According to Wallin (2007), Bowlby believed that internal models have the potential to be updated by new and altered relationships or even by heightened awareness, yet he observed that these models often are not revised for two reasons: (1) they so frequently function outside conscious awareness; and (2) the individual's self-protective defenses.

A primary and important aspect of adult attachment security lies in the family of origin. Parent-child attachment encourages the social and emotional comfort in a child and helps establish attachments in the future. This attachment affects emotions in adulthood (Levesque, 2012). According to Hazan and Shaver (1987), the emotional bond that develops between adult romantic partners is due largely in part to the same motivational system, meaning the attachment behavioral system, that is responsible for the emotional bond between infants and their caregivers. They conclude that individuals gradually transfer attachment-related functions from parents to peers as they develop. Young children tend to use their parents as their primary attachment figures, but as they reach adolescence and young adulthood, they come to rely more upon close friends and/or romantic partners for basic attachment-related functions.

Since adult romantic relationships are attachments, we can expect attachment theory to be beneficial in couple therapy. Emotionally focused couple therapy (EFT) has proven this to be the case. EFT was developed by Susan Johnson in the 1980s based on the idea that the way couples deal with each other reflects their attachment history. Nichols (2013) offers this explanation of EFT:

Susan Johnson uses attachment theory to deconstruct the familiar dynamic in which one partner criticizes and complains while the other gets defensive and withdraws. What attachment theory suggests is that the criticism and complaining are protests against disruption of the attachment bond – in other words, the nagging partner may be more insecure than angry. (p. 63).

EFT is a short-term therapy that places the primary focus on emotion. Johnson (2004) notes,

In EFT, emotion is seen as the prime player in the drama of relationship distress and in changing that distress. It is emotion that organizes behaviors, that orients and motivates us to respond to others and communicates our needs and longings to them. In EFT, emotion, rather than being minimized or controlled or simply labeled, is developed and differentiated. (p. 13).

Using an integrative approach, EFT looks within at how individuals process their experience, especially their key attachment-oriented emotional responses, and looks between at how partners organize their interactions into patterns and cycles. The goal then becomes to reprocess experience and reorganize interactions to create a secure bond between couples along with a sense of secure connectedness. Throughout the therapy the focus is always on attachment concerns, safety, trust, contact, and obstacles to creating a secure emotional bond (Johnson, 2004). In essence, EFT helps couples to update their internal working models. The case study in this thesis-project will reflect the use of EFT as a therapeutic treatment for the family involved, in particular the family subsystem of husband and wife. This approach was chosen because it is evidenced-based. As stated by Johnson (2004), “EFT is the most empirically validated approach to couple therapy,

apart from the behavioral approaches, and has 20 years of outcome and process research to draw on” (p. 8).

Summary

The greatest factor that influences the identity of people is genetics. After that, it is family of origin. Our family of origin is the group of individuals that we spend the most childhood years with being physically, mentally, and emotionally influenced by them. By traditional definition, we share a genetic or legal bond with these individuals. They determine how we think and feel about ourselves, what we believe about the world we live in, how we relate to others, and much more. Primary attachment originates in an individual’s family of origin. While all relationships in the family are significant, it is primarily the early relationship between child and caregiver that is viewed as most influential, and, therefore, most important. From this relationship, a child will either create a secure or insecure emotional attachment that will influence his or her personality and development. The attachment relationship is also responsible for the child forming internal working models which are mental representations that consist of expectations about the self, about others, and relationships with others. One of the primary tenets of attachment theory is that the internal working models from our attachment relationship are with us throughout our lifetime. As a result, relationships formed outside of a person’s family of origin, such as romantic relationships, are impacted by the person’s attachment history for better or for worse.

CHAPTER 2

THE BIBLE AND ATTACHMENT

A Religious View of Attachment

One way to view the idea of human attachment is from a scientific perspective. Bowlby took this approach and studied attachment as a science. The core of attachment theory as a science is that our most basic instinct and compelling need is for relationship and for connection (Johnson and Sanderfer, 2016). Another way to view the idea of human attachment is from a religious perspective. Granqvist and Kirkpatrick (2013) explain:

As a central tenet of the religion-as-attachment model, we argue that God (and other divine figures) function like symbolic attachment figures to whom believers actively strive to obtain or maintain a sense of being connected. From an attachment perspective, it is thus not surprising that the term religion (from the Latin *religare*) literally means “being bound” or “connected” (Ferm, 1945). Viewed this way, religion refers to the institutionalized pillars erected around people’s sense of “spiritual connection”, whereas spirituality refers to the private or personal components of this connection. (p. 141).

Attachment is more than just a scientific concept. As it pertains to attachment, science is merely catching up to religion. Thompson (2010) makes the same suggestion by saying,

Although attachment as a formal domain of scientific study is relatively new, the concept is not, as the creation narrative in Scripture makes clear. At the dawn of creation, being connected was as natural and as necessary as breathing, and a

reflection of God's own state of being – one of community, integration, and connection. (p. 111)

Attachment theory not only helps us understand the dynamics of our relationship with family, but it can also help Christians understand their relationship with God. According to Thompson (2010) our attachment patterns not only impact our relationships with other people, but they are also one of the primary forces that shape our relationship with God. Therefore, paying attention to our attachment means we are, in fact, paying attention to our connection with God.

In the previous chapter we were introduced to the attachment theory from the scientific perspective. In this chapter, we will look at attachment through religious eyes, and thus explore God as an attachment figure and its impact on our relationship with God and with one another. In contrasting the scientific and religious views of human attachment, Miner (2007) states:

Whereas the cognitive models hold that the motivation for attachment to God is an evolutionary-based drive for survival through protection from predators (Bowlby, 1969, 1986, 1988) and working models are potentially available to conscious awareness (Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1990, 1992) the relational model of attachment to God proposed by Todd Hall (2004) holds that the motivation for religious attachment is a need for felt security and that working models are unconscious, implicit representations of relationships. (p. 113)

God – The Attachment Pattern

The Trinity

For Christians, when considering an attachment relationship with God, it is important to remember that God is Trinity (Miner, 2007). The word, Trinity, is not found in scripture; but rather it is a term used to describe the three coexistent, coeternal, and coequal Persons who make up God. These distinct Persons are known as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Armstrong (2001) argues,

The doctrine of the Trinity has stood at the center of biblical and historical Christian faith from the beginning. Far from being an obscure dogma of confused early Christian theologians, or an unnecessary stumbling block to modern minds, this truth is indispensable to the true Christian revelation of God. If this truth goes, then our doctrine of God, Christ, sin, and salvation all go. (p. 7)

Although the three members of the Trinity are distinct Persons, one is not inferior to the others. Instead, they each share the same identical attributes. Garlington (2001) says,

There are no differences in deity, attributes, or essential nature between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each person is fully God and has all the attributes of God. The only distinctions between the members of the Trinity are in the ways they relate to each other and to creation. In those relationships they carry out roles that are appropriate to each person. (p. 36)

At first glance, the doctrine of the Trinity seems to divide God into three parts. This is not the case, however, because each Person in the Trinity is fully God. The Bible speaks of the Father as God (John 6:27), Jesus is described as being fully human and

fully God (Colossians 2:9, 1 John 5:20, Philippians 2:5-8), and the Holy Spirit is called God (Acts 5:3-4). Grudem (1994) states,

When we speak of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit together we are not speaking of any greater being than when we speak of the Father alone, or the Son alone, or the Holy Spirit alone. The Father is all of God's being. The Son also is all of God's being. And the Holy Spirit is all of God's being. (p. 252).

Perhaps the most puzzling part of the doctrine of the Trinity is that there is one God. It seems logical to conclude that there are three Gods since God is three distinct Persons and each Person is fully God. However, the Bible in Deuteronomy 6:4 clearly states, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one." The Christian God is one God who cannot be treated like a pie where you can take one slice, but leave the others. If any one of the three were removed, there would be no God. Perman (2006) makes the following keen observation in support of the oneness of God:

If there is one passage which most clearly brings all of this together, it is Matthew 28:19: "Make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." First, notice that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinguished as distinct Persons. We baptize into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Second, notice that each Person must be deity because they are all placed on the same level. In fact, would Jesus have us baptize in the name of a mere creature? Surely not. Therefore each of the Persons into whose name we are to be baptized must be deity. Third, notice that although the three divine Persons are distinct, we are baptized into their name (singular), not names (plural). The three Persons are distinct, yet only constitute

one name. This can only be if they share one essence. (There is only one God, para. 3).

There is biblical evidence for a triune God in both the Old Testament and New Testament. Biblical scholars note that in Genesis 1:1 of the Old Testament, the Hebrew word for God used is Elohim. Elohim is a plural noun. Several verses later in Genesis 1:26, God speaks of himself using the plural pronoun, us, saying: “let us make man in our image, after our likeness...” God does the same in other Old Testament passages such as Genesis 3:22, 11:7, and Isaiah 6:8. The use of Elohim and the plural pronoun, us, clearly indicates more than one. In the New Testament, Matthew 3:16-17 records that all three Persons of the Godhead were present at Jesus baptism. When Jesus came out of the water, the Holy Spirit descended on him like a dove, and the Father spoke to him from Heaven. Matthew also records that believers are to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19) which indicates the believer’s connection to the distinct Persons of the Godhead.

Attachment in the Trinity

The doctrine of the Trinity presents a God who exists in close community which indicates a God who exists in an attachment relationship. Scripture bears witness of the various signs of attachment in the Godhead. There is the closeness and security of the Godhead. Twice in scripture the voice of God the Father is recorded as saying words of affirmation to Jesus. When it was time for Jesus to begin his ministry, he went to the Jordan River to be baptized by John the Baptist. The gospel writers record that God the Father spoke to Jesus saying, “This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17). These words are not only a sign of the closeness between the Father and

Jesus, but they also demonstrate the Father providing a sense of security to Jesus as he begins his earthly mission. Jesus begins his ministry knowing that the Father loves him and is well pleased with him simply because of their coeternal relationship. Matthew indicates that the Holy Spirit was also present in the form of a dove and he came to rest on Jesus. This indicates touch which is another form of closeness, security, affirmation, and comfort. At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus not only heard from God in the Person of the Father, but he also felt the touch of God in the Person of the Holy Spirit.

When it was nearing time for Jesus to endure the cross, he went on a mountain with three of his disciples. The gospel writers record that he was transfigured on that mountain. Once again, God the Father spoke words of affirmation to Jesus, the same as were spoken at his baptism (Matthew 17:5). Luke in his version of the story tells the reader that Jesus was having a conversation with Moses and Elijah about his death (Luke 9:30-31). This insight from Luke informs the reader that as Jesus talked about his impending death, an uncomfortable subject, God the Father provided him comfort and security through his words of affirmation. Jesus could face his forthcoming execution knowing that the Father loves him and is well pleased with him simply because of their coeternal relationship.

Jesus spoke on several occasions about his closeness with the Father. He is recorded as saying, “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30), “I am in the Father and the Father is in me” (John 14:11), and “whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing” (John 5:19-20). While Jesus’ words demonstrate a closeness with the Father after his incarnation, the Bible also speaks about his closeness with God before his incarnation.

John writes that “in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God” (John 1:1-2). John refers to the pre-incarnate Jesus as the Word. He makes it clear that the Word is a member of the Godhead and, as such, he has coexisted with God from the beginning. As Jesus prepared to face the last days of his earthly life, he prayed to God saying, “And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed” (John 17:5). Jesus confirms John’s statement that he has coexisted with God from the beginning. The testimony of scripture is that there is a bond between the Persons of the Godhead that has been present from the beginning.

Another sign of attachment in the Godhead is the response to separation and loss. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed to the Father about removing a cup from him. Luke writes in his gospel that Jesus’ sweat became like great drops of blood falling to the ground as he prayed about the removal of this cup (Luke 22:39-44). If one understands the cup to represent the wrath of God against sin, then one concludes that Jesus was experiencing severe distress as he faced the reality of impending separation from the Father. Scripture teaches that sin separates the sinner from God (Isaiah 59:2). On the cross, Jesus became sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21) which meant he had to experience separation from God. He had always been with God (his attachment figure). Even while on earth, scripture testifies that God was with him (Acts 10:38). For the first time in his coeternal existence with God, Jesus would be separated from God as he bore the sins of humanity. The gospel writers record that while hanging on the cross, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me” (Matthew 27:46) as he experienced the agony of loss and separation (from his attachment figure).

What one finds in scripture is a God who is the pattern for attachment relationships in humans. Boccia (2011) draws the same conclusion:

What is more likely is that God created the capacity for attachments in us in order to form a foundation for attachment to himself, and this primary capacity also allows us to form attachments with other human beings. God himself is the foundation for our capacity to form attachments to him and, therefore, also to one another. That foundation is found in the very nature of God as the Trinity, a perfect, loving community of three persons in one being. (p. 25).

Once we understand attachment in the Godhead, we will understand that we are created for connection – connection with God and with one another.

The Image of God

The Bible indicates that humanity is created in the image of God: “Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:26-27). Grudem (1994) explains that the Hebrew words for “image” (*tselem*) and “likeness” (*dêmût*) refer to something that is similar, but not identical to the thing it represents. Humanity, then, was created to be similar to God, but not identical to God.

Beck and Demarest (2005) present three views that attempt to describe how humans are similar to God or created in God’s image. The first view is called the substantive view. It is the oldest and most widely held view having been predominant throughout church history. It is also the only view of the three that distinguishes between the terms “image” and “likeness.” This viewpoint suggests that humans possess certain qualities or characteristics that make humanity like God. Some supporters of this view

argue that the fall damaged or destroyed the image of God, while others teach that the image of God was not affected at all by the fall. According to Beck and Demarest (2005), “early Christian thought, immersed in the Greek intellectual world, tended to interpret the imago in terms of intellect or reason” (p. 145). The second view is called the functional view. According to this viewpoint, being made in the image of God has to do with what a person does instead of with what a person is. Beck and Demarest (2005) explains, “typically, functional views interpret the imago as the human person’s exercise of dominion over the created order and lower creatures. As God reigns over all the earth, so the human person rules the material world under God’s authority” (p.141).

The third view is called the relational view. This view suggests that just as there is plurality in the Godhead – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; there is also plurality in humanity – male and female. Therefore, humans are similar to God when it comes to their various relationships. Knabb and Emerson (2013) agree stating, “God exists as one being in three persons, or as Trinity, and is fundamentally relational. Because the very nature of God is relational, being created in God’s image is naturally relational as well” (p. 833). The relational view gives support to the idea that humans are created for connection with both God and other humans as stated by Beck and Demarest (2005):

The human person is imago Dei in that he or she has been created to relate with God and with other humans in community. In terms of horizontal relationships, the coexistence and cooperation of God himself is repeated in the relation of man to man. (p. 143)

In saying that humans were created in the image of God, who himself exists in an attachment relationship, the Bible implies that humans also were created to exist in

attachment relationships. This is emphasized by Boccia (2011) in the following statement:

In contemporary evangelical thought, the emphasis recently has been on the idea that we are made for relationship: first with God and then with each other. The divine relationships among the persons of the Trinity are the foundation for this and the model for human relationships. Thus, it has been argued that this relational quality, most specifically in the one-flesh relationship of marriage, is an aspect of the image of God in human beings. The Trinitarian view of mutuality and self-giving love both explains and motivates human relationships. Thus, contrary to the psychological models, human relationships are derived from the Trinity's mutual relationships. (p. 25)

God – The Attachment Figure

An important part of human interaction is relationships. Among the many relationships formed, there is one that is primary, especially for the Christian. “Relationship with God is primary. We relate to others because we are capable of relating to God, being made in his image” (Boccia, 2011, p. 26). If one's relationship with God is the primary relationship, then consideration must be given to how one's relationship with God is an attachment relationship. Attachment researchers note that one's relationship with God bears similarity to attachment relationships in infants and adults. The central focus of the attachment theory is on the relationship between the infant and the caregiver who is also the attachment figure. Kirkpatrick and Shaver (1990) note that several studies indicate a link between people's images of God and of their parents, particularly of their mothers who are more likely to be the primary attachment

figures. They conclude that this may reflect a process by which internal working models of attachment figures during childhood provide the basis for adult attachment to God.

Boccia (2011) correctly expresses what this means for caregivers by stating:

The implications for caregivers are profound: caregivers who promote secure attachments can be seen as fulfilling a spiritual task because they are developing the capacity for a person to be able to experience relationship with God and to enter into a trusting and secure relationship with a God who is seen as safe and loving. (p. 26)

The relationship between the Christian believer and God is based on love. As in other attachment relationships, there exists an emotional connection and affectional bond between the believer and God. Scripture abounds with references to this reciprocating love relationship. According to the Bible writers, God shows his love in the following ways: First, he shows his love by sending Jesus to die for humanity. Paul says to the Romans, “God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). To the Ephesians Paul says, “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved” (Ephesians 2:4-5). The Apostle John penned the most popular scripture about God sending Jesus to die for humanity. He says, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). John also says the following:

In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have

loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

(1 John 4:9-10)

Second, God shows his love by calling believers his children. John expresses his delight by saying, “see what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are” (1 John 3:1). Third, God shows his love by disciplining his believers. Proverbs 3:12 says, “for the Lord reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights.” In his letter to the Laodicea church, Jesus reminded them of his love through discipline by saying, “those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent” (Revelation 3:19).

Bible writers also record how believers show their love to God: (1) through loyalty. The first commandment in the Decalogue states, “you shall have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3). Moses told the people of Israel, “you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might (Deuteronomy 6:5). Jesus confirmed to the religious people of his day that what Moses said is the greatest commandment (Matthew 22:36-38). The Apostle John boldly says, “we love because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19). John makes it clear that the believer’s love is a loyal response to God’s love; (2) through obedience. Jesus said, “whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me (John 14:21). Again, Jesus said, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him” (John 14:23).

Kirkpatrick and Shaver (1990) make the point that many psychological writers have noted the degree to which religion provides people with a sense of security and confidence that allows them to function effectively in everyday life. This indicates that

the believer's relationship with God is consistent with an attachment theoretical framework. Clinton and Sibcy (2002) give five criteria for an attachment relationship: (1) proximity or closeness to the caregiver is sought; (2) the caregiver provides a safe haven; (3) the caregiver provides a secure base for exploration; (4) any threat of separation induces fear and anxiety; and (5) loss of the caregiver causes grief and sorrow. Research and scripture support the presence of these five criteria in the believer's attachment relationship with God. The remainder of this section will discuss the five criteria.

Proximity is an important part of the believer's relationship with God. Christians speak of having a personal relationship with God which indicates the need for proximity. Kirkpatrick and Shaver (1990) make the following observation:

The imagery and language used by many Christians to represent their beliefs is strongly reminiscent of attachment phenomena: God or Jesus is "by one's side," "holding one's hand," or "holding one in his arms," enabling believers (by their own account) to cope with stress and face the trials and tribulations of the world. (p. 319).

Scripture reveals a God who desires to be near his people. He is near to all who need him as indicated by Psalm 145:18, "The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth," and James 4:8, "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you." He is near to those who grieve, mourn, and sorrow as declared in Psalm 34:18, "The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit." He is near to those who are in danger as promised in Isaiah 43:2, "When you pass through the waters,

I will be with you,” and as confirmed in Psalm 23, “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me.”

God’s ultimate act of proximity is seen in the incarnation of Jesus Christ who is declared by scripture to be God with us (Matthew 1:23). The believer in Christ experiences proximity to God: (1) through the blood of Jesus as explained in Ephesians 2:13, “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ”; and (2) through an intimate relationship with Jesus as described in John 15:4, “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me”; and also in revelation 3:20, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.”

As noted by Boccia (2011) there are some difficulties with drawing a one-to-one comparison between proximity in human attachment and attachment to God. Attachment theory states that proximity is sought in response to threat, separation, or loss of the attachment figure. God as the attachment figure, however, is always near due to his incommunicable attribute of being omnipresent (Psalm 139). While the believer cannot physically access God as can be done in human attachment, proximity to God in times of trouble is still possible. First, using the example of the Psalm writer, David, the believer can draw close to God through music. Singing hymns such as “Draw Me Nearer” or composing one’s own lyrics and melody can help the believer sense the nearness of God. Second, the believer can draw close to God by attending church. Christians believe that where two or more are gathered together, God is present with them (Matthew 18:20); therefore, close proximity to God in times of trouble can be maintained through church

attendance. Third, the believer can draw close to God through prayer. For the Christian prayer is a direct conversation with God who hears what is said, and responds according to his sovereign will. God himself invites his people to call upon him as stated in Psalm 50:15, “Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.” When his people call on him, God promises to hear and answer as he declares in Isaiah 65:24, “Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear.”

In times of trouble or difficulties, God becomes a safe haven for most people. According to Bowlby (1969/1982), three kinds of situations activate the attachment system causing attachment behavior: (1) illness, injury or fatigue; (2) separation from or loss of the attachment figure; (3) frightening events. Granqvist and Kirkpatrick (2013) note that the reasons people turn to God as a safe haven resembles Bowlby’s attachment activation list: (1) illness, disability, and negative life events that cause mental and physical distress; (2) death or impending death of friends or relatives; (3) dealing with unfavorable life situations. A 21st century example is the tragic terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Immediately following this national tragedy, many people displayed renewed religious commitment. Uecker (2011) reports the following:

Americans overwhelmingly claim to have used religion and spirituality as methods of coping with the events of 9/11; 90 percent claim to have turned to prayer, religion, or spiritual feelings at some level in order to deal with the tragedy, including 44 percent who said they relied heavily on these coping mechanisms. (para. 3)

Multiple biblical characters speak of God as a safe haven in times of trouble. King Solomon says in Proverbs 18:2, “The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the

righteous man runs into it and is safe.” The sons of Korah declared in Psalm 46:1 that “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” King David testified in Psalm 27:5, “For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock.” Psalm 91, which is known as the Psalm of Protection, says the following:

Because you have made the Lord your dwelling place, the Most High who is
my refuge, no evil shall be allowed to befall you, no plague come near your tent.
For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.
(Psalm 91:9-11)

In the New Testament, Jesus extends the invitation in Matthew 11:28, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” The Apostle Peter advises that the best way to find comfort is by casting all your anxieties on Jesus, because he cares for you (1 Peter 5:7).

Kirkpatrick and Shavers (1990) suggest that the God of most Christian traditions seems to closely match the idea of a secure attachment figure. Christians believe they have full and immediate access to God at any time and for any reason making him the ideal secure base. Boccia (2011) reports that “typically, following a religious conversion, people report an increase in a sense of wellbeing and considerable decrease in distress. That is, individuals experience felt security from their encounter with God” (p. 24). Scripture confirms that God is a secure attachment figure. Believers have the security of knowing that God will hear them. King David says in Psalm 18:6, “In my distress I called upon the Lord; to my God I cried for help. From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears.” David also says in Psalm 86:7, “In the day of my

trouble I call upon you, for you answer me.” God himself says in Jeremiah 29:12-13, “Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.” Believers also have the security of knowing that God is always present with them. God says in Hebrew 13:5, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” Jesus says the same in Matthew 28:20, “behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

There is a threat of separation from God as the attachment figure in scripture. Granqvist and Kirkpatrick (2013) correctly state that “in most Christian belief systems, separation from God is the very essence of hell” (p. 142). The Bible issues a warning to those who do not know God and who do not obey the gospel, saying, “They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might” (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9). Jesus spoke of separation from God as being cast into outer darkness (Matthew 8:12, 22:13, 25:30). The Bible also makes it clear that unrighteous people will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9), and neither will those whose names are not written in the Lamb’s book of life (Revelation 21:27).

The loss of God as an attachment figure will cause grief and sorrow for some as seemingly implied by Jesus who says in the place of outer darkness “there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 8:12). In contrast, the good news for believers is that there is no separation from God and, therefore, no loss of their attachment figure. Believers have this assurance from the Apostle Paul who says in Romans 8:37-39:

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Biblical Storyline

The role of God as an attachment figure is also seen in the biblical storyline of creation, fall, redemption, and new creation. Scripture reveals the attachment among God, humans, and creation in the creation story; the tragic results of the attachment being severed in the fall; the redemption plan which provides the means for reattachment through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus; and the promise of a new creation and restored attachment relationship among God, humans, and creation. The following paragraphs will briefly examine each of the four themes of the biblical storyline as they relate to God as an attachment figure.

The Bible in Genesis 1-2 provides the story of creation. God created Adam and Eve to be in relationship with God, with one another, and with creation. God is their secure base by virtue of the fact that he is their life-giver, their sustainer, and their means of finding purpose in life. God provided Adam and Eve a place to live in the Garden of Eden which was not only a safe place, but also a place where God would be accessible to them. With God as their safe haven and secure base, Adam and Eve were able to explore the garden and enjoy all that it had to offer with only one restriction - do not eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Genesis 1:16-17). Thus, in the creation story God is presented as an attachment figure for his human creation who are able to maintain close proximity to God as they explore his creation.

Genesis not only provides the story of creation, but also the story of humanity's fall into sin. In Genesis 3, it is revealed that Adam and Eve did, in fact, eat from the one and only forbidden tree in the Garden of Eden. The result of their disobedience was separation. First, they were separated from God, their attachment figure, with the threat

of permanent loss of the attachment relationship due to the punishment of death. This separation was manifested when God came looking for them after they ate the forbidden fruit and instead of running to God, they hid from him (Genesis 3:8). Second, they were physically and emotionally separated from one another. The evidence of this separation came after they ate the fruit, and they realized they were naked so they covered themselves with fig leaves to avoid shame (Genesis 3:7). It continued when they had to give an account to God for their actions and Adam blamed Eve for his wrongdoing (Genesis 3:12). Third, they were separated from their safe place, the Garden of Eden. This separation came when God put them out of the Garden, and prevented them from returning by blocking off all entrances to the Garden (Genesis 3:23-24). Adam and Eve lost their close proximity to God and, as a result, they lost God as their secure base and safe haven. This pattern of separation continued throughout the history of God's people, Israel. Knabb and Emerson (2013) note that the story of Israel is a story of exile as a result of continued turning away from God.

The good news of the gospel is that God through Jesus restores the relationship between God and humanity (2 Corinthians 5:19). After Adam and Eve sinned in Genesis 3, God promised redemption by announcing, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15). This was the promise of a Messiah who would bring humanity back into harmonious relationship with God, with one another, and with the rest of creation. This was accomplished through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the Messiah. He paid the penalty for sin on the cross; defeated death, hell, and the grave by his resurrection; and gives new life to all who, by faith, believe in him. Jesus

becomes the believer's safe haven and secure base. By maintaining close proximity to Jesus, believers are able to experience God as their attachment figure. Salvation, then, is essentially reunification or reattachment to God (Knabb and Emerson, 2013).

The work of Jesus also brings about the restoration of creation. God will make a new heavens and a new earth for his people. God promises to dwell in the midst of his people (Revelation 21:3). The separation that occurred in Genesis finally comes to an end in Revelation. God and redeemed humanity will be able to live throughout eternity in an attachment relationship without the threat of separation or loss ever again. The hope of Christians is eternal life through Jesus Christ which includes living in a new creation, and living in close proximity to God who will be their safe haven and secure base forever. The Christian scriptures from the first book, Genesis, to the last book, Revelation, demonstrate the primacy of attachment to God both in the original creation and in the promised new creation. As suggested by Knabb and Emerson (2013), the central tenets of attachment theory – secure base, exploration, attachment behaviors, and safe haven – are embedded within the biblical storyline.

Marriage – The Attachment Relationship

The Bible makes humanity's relationship with God primary, but secondary is the relationship with one another. The creation story in Genesis 2 records that after God created Adam, he brought all of the animals to Adam so that Adam could name the animals. From this experience, Adam realized that he himself had no helper or counterpart who was human like him. In response, "the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him"" (Genesis 2:18). Using one of Adam's ribs, God created a female counterpart for Adam. God performed

the first marriage ceremony, thus, creating the first relationship between humans as well as establishing the first human family.

In bringing Adam and Eve together, God stated, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” (Genesis 2:24, NKJV). This language identifies marriage as an attachment relationship. First, marriage involves leaving. The man and the woman are to leave the caregiver-child relationship from their family of origin in order to form a new relationship and new family. Second, marriage involves cleaving or joining. The Hebrew word translated “cleave” or “join” means to pursue hard after someone else, and it also means to be glued or stuck to something or someone (Vine, 1996). This indicates a physical and emotional bond between the man and the woman which can be described in one word - attachment. As is the case in an attachment relationship, there is close proximity in the marriage relationship. There is no closer relationship than that between husband and wife, not even the relationship with parents, siblings, or offspring. Third, marriage involves becoming one flesh. In this way, the marriage relationship resembles the Godhead relationship. Just as the three Persons of the Godhead are one God, so the two persons in the marriage are one flesh.

God designed marriage to be a relationship where the man and woman would be a safe haven and secure base for one another. Jesus seems to make this very suggestion when he said, “What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate” (Matthew 19:6). Based on Jesus words, marriage was designed to be a permanent attachment relationship. Yet, there exists the threat of separation and loss through the process of divorce. Divorce causes the loss of the attachment figure in the marriage; therefore, God

says he hates divorce (Malachi 2:16). Sexual immorality is the only exception given in the Bible for divorce. Jesus explained in Matthew 19:8, “Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.”

Marriage not only resembles the Trinity relationship, but it also illustrates the attachment relationship between God and his people. Just as the husband and wife are to cleave or be joined to one another, God commands his people to serve him and cleave or be joined to him (Deuteronomy 13:4). The same Hebrew word translated as “cleave” or “joined” is used in both Genesis 2:24 and Deuteronomy 13:4. Throughout the scriptures, the relationship between God and his people is referenced using marriage terminology. In the Old Testament, God is portrayed as a husband who entered into a marriage or covenant relationship with his people, Israel, who is portrayed as an unfaithful lover (Ezekiel 16:8-42). In keeping with the words of Jesus, “What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate,” God remained faithful to his bride even though Israel was continually unfaithful. He renewed his marriage vows with Israel by promising to make a new covenant, announcing in Jeremiah 31:31-34:

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord.”

In the New Testament, under the new covenant, Jesus is portrayed as the bridegroom (Mark 2:19-20) while Christians believers, collectively called the church, are portrayed as the bride of Christ (Revelation 19:7). All those who express faith in Jesus, whether under

the Old Covenant or New Covenant, are said to be invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:9), which figuratively represents the official celebration of the permanent restoration of the attachment relationship between God and humans (Revelation 21:1-3).

Conclusion

Human attachment is merely a response to God's creation purpose. God is Trinity, which is a term used to describe the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as being three coexistent, coeternal, and coequal Persons who are God. Yet, Christians do not worship and serve three Gods, but one God who exists in an attachment relationship with each other. God created humans, both male and female, in his image and likeness. Humans have the capacity for relationships. Scripture reveals as primary the relationship with God and as secondary the relationship with one another. The relationship Christians have with God is an attachment relationship. God is a safe haven and secure base for Christians who maintain close proximity to God through their relationship with Jesus. God initiated the first human attachment relationship with one another when he joined together Adam and Eve in marriage. Humans are instructed by God to leave their initial attachment relationship between caregiver and child in order to form a new attachment relationship between husband and wife. The marriage relationship illustrates both the Trinity relationship and God's relationship with his people in both the Old and New Testaments.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Attachment Debate

One of the pillar thoughts of attachment theory said to have originated from John Bowlby himself is that our lives, from the cradle to the grave, revolve around intimate relationships. Psychologists, however, debate whether or not attachment behavior is the result of nature (genetic inheritance and other biological factors) or nurture (external factors such as experiences and learning). Bowlby (1969/1982) declared “In the development of attachment behaviour, as in the development of every biological character, nature and nurture play continually interacting parts” (p. 240). According to Balswick and Balswick (2014), it was assumed that nature rather than nurture was responsible for human behavior; that is, until the emergence of the social sciences. They argue that biological influences on a family must be considered in order to get a complete and accurate understanding of the family, but also to understand the behavior of individual family members which can be influenced by both biological and social factors.

Differences in caregivers’ behavior is how attachment theory explains individual variations in patterns of early attachment behavior. Gervai (2009) argues that the purely environmental explanation of attachment theory is being challenged by meta-analyses which have shown that parenting behavior accounts for about one third of the variance in attachment security or disorganization. She reviewed evidence for environmental influences and for genetic and gene-environment interaction effects on developing early attachment relationships. She concludes that studies investigating the interaction of molecular genes with parenting environment in the course of early relationship

development suggest that children's differential susceptibility to the rearing environment depends partly on genetic differences.

Belsky (2009) points to the many naturalistic field studies, including his own, which have found that sensitivity experienced during the early years of life results in security; while, on the other hand, insensitivity results in insecurity. He also mentions that experimental research has demonstrated that systematic and effective efforts to promote sensitive-responsive parenting increased the likelihood of the infant establishing a secure attachment. Yet, he admits that the anticipated and detected effects of sensitivity on attachment security have not proven as significant nor as powerful as presupposed. He concludes that some children are simply born secure while others are made secure or insecure by the quality of care during their upbringing.

According to Lerner (1992), “in the developmental contextual view, genes do not act independently of the environment; they are neither the primary nor the ultimate causal influence on behavior. Instead, hereditary and environment are seen as co-equal forces in the determination of behavior” (p. 150). In other words, both nature and nurture are necessary for any behavior. It is impossible to separate the two influences. It cannot be said that a particular behavior is genetic and another is environmental. There are simply too many facts on both sides of the argument which are inconsistent with an all or nothing view. So instead of asking whether attachment is based on nature or nurture, a more appropriate question would be: “How much?” In other words, which is the more important given that heredity and environment both influence the person we become. Both are also influencing factors from our family of origin.

Family of Origin

The importance of a person's immediate family is well documented. The structure and quality of family support networks develop over time and influence psychological well-being across the adult lifespan (Fuller-Iglesias, Webster, and Antonucci, 2015). One of the primary factors for psychological well-being is the degree of emotional closeness that exists in a family, better known as cohesion. Balswick and Balswick (2014) note that there is a connection between family cohesion and positive family outcomes such as child social competence. The amount of cohesion varies from family to family. Too much cohesion causes enmeshment meaning family members lack a sense of separate identity or individuality. This leads to each family member becoming overly dependent on the family or other members for identity. Too little cohesion causes disengagement meaning the life of each family member rarely touches the other members in a meaningful way. In other words, family members lack involvement, and they do not contribute to or cooperate with one another. Cohesion also varies from one life stage to another as explained by Balswick and Balswick (2014):

The degree of cohesion is higher with young children when the emotional bonding between parent and child is a primary focus. When children become teenagers and are working toward self-identity, it is fitting that they separate emotionally in preparation for the independence necessary to eventually leave home. But even when they achieve suitable autonomy, they view themselves as part of – and keep close ties with – the family throughout life. (p. 37)

While developmental psychology has carefully documented the importance of family relationship quality in childhood and adolescence, Fuller-Iglesias et al. (2015)

argue that not enough is known about connections between family relationship quality and well-being in the broader context of adult development. Their study provides research on family implications for well-being over time by examining the interplay of family convoy structure and quality among young, middle-aged, and older adults. As they expected, based on the research literature, young and middle-aged adults experienced increased depressive symptoms due to family negativity. Such findings demonstrate that when qualitative aspects of family relationships change so does the psychological well-being of young and middle-aged adults. However, the opposite proved to be true for older adults who are more influenced by quantitative aspects of family relationships.

When it comes to family of origin influences on new relationships, Dinero, Conger, Shaver, Widaman, and Larsen-Rife (2008) agree with existing research which suggests that the nature of the parent-child relationship does, in fact, influence subsequent romantic relationships. As well, there is a small association between parent-child attachment representations and romantic attachment representations. In their study, they found that family of origin interactions does initially influence attachment security, but as time goes on family of origin influences decreases; and is replaced by influences from the romantic partner.

Some researchers used the Vulnerability-Stress-Adaptation (VSA) Model for their research. According to this model, enduring vulnerabilities, defined as stable factors that individuals bring to their relationships, are linked to marital outcomes such as satisfaction and stability. The link is directly through adaptive processes which are defined as ways spouses solve problems and interact with one another. Using the VSA as a guiding

framework in their research, Hardy, Soloski, Ratcliffe, Anderson, and Willoughby (2015) describe family of origin factors as enduring vulnerabilities that partners bring to their marriages. They state that, “it is apparent that negative experiences in the family of origin, here defined as an enduring vulnerability, can influence marital outcomes through adaptive processes” (p. 510). They believe that relationship self-regulation (RSR), defined as the extent to which individual partners work to sustain their relationship, could possibly explain an indirect association between family of origin experiences and marital outcomes. They conclude, “Overall, findings confirm that family of origin is an important factor in explaining couples’ efforts at relationship work and that RSR acts as an adaptive process that may help couples sustain a satisfying and stable marriage” (p. 520).

Levesque (2012) argues that parent-child attachment is responsible for producing social and emotional comfort in a child which, in turn, helps the child establish attachments in the future. She explains as follows:

The family of origin's expressive atmosphere is an important component of the social and emotional environment... More specifically, higher levels of emotional expressive atmosphere in the family of origin were linked with lower levels of avoidance and anxiety in adult romantic attachment. Therefore, people who are able to effectively express their emotions in the family of origin tend to have better attachment security. (p. 147)

She does note that anxiety levels are raised when there is confusion over emotional interactions in the family of origin resulting in suspicions and doubts for future romantic relationships.

Gardner et al. (2011) suggest that there is a connection between family of origin experience and several different areas of relationship outcomes and processes. They mention the transmission of communication patterns and practices from the family of origin, and the transmission of violence from the family of origin as all having been documented as influencing future romantic relationship processes. They link relationship maintenance and commitment levels in future relationships to family of origin experience. They conclude that “family of origin influences and experiences not only have an effect on the way individuals think and behave in relationships, but also on the ways they attach meaning to their own as well as their partner’s characteristic behavior” (p. 266).

Research indicates that negative family of origin experiences influence future romantic relationships in a variety of ways. For example, married couples who experience negative responses to stress may be able to trace the root of the problem back to family of origin influences (Knapp et al., 2015). According to Gardner et al. (2011) “children whose parents divorce are more likely to see their own marriages end in divorce, and that these children are also more likely to report relationship problems, conflict, perceived instability, and lack of trust in their own relationships” (p. 254). Hardy et al. (2015) remark that research seems to support that negative family of origin experiences are linked to lower levels of relationship quality and an increased risk of divorce. As a result, they suggest that marital difficulty can be theoretically explained by the experiences within one’s family of origin.

Research shows that several family of origin factors influence later romantic relationships including parenting practices, marital interactions, and the behavior of

individual family members. Clearly, family of origin experiences can have an enduring impact on new relationships (Hardy et al., 2015). One explanation for why this is so, is found in the attachment theory.

Attachment Theory

The importance of the mother-infant relationship on children's development during the early years of life has been well established in literature. Research has shown that a mother's ability to attune, regulate, and appropriately respond to an infant is central to the relational and developmental process of the infant. (Snyder et al., 2012). When one considers a theoretical view of the mother-infant relationship, there are three terms that must be understood: object relations, dependency, and attachment. According to Ainsworth (1969), these three terms are not synonymous, but they do overlap in their implications. She provides a definition for each of the terms. Object relations is a concept taken from psychoanalytic instinct theory. Ainsworth (1969) says,

The "object" of an instinct is the agent through which the instinctual aim is achieved, and the agent is usually conceived as being another person. It is generally agreed that the infant's first object is his mother. The origin of object relations lies in the first year of life, and most, although not all, psychoanalysts have viewed the infant's initial relationship with his mother as being essentially oral in nature. (p. 970)

“Although the term dependency has been used by some psychoanalysts to characterize the infant's preobjectal relations, it is especially linked to social learning theories” (Ainsworth, 1969, p. 970). As with object relations, the infant's first dependency relationship is with the mother or primary caregiver. Ainsworth (1969) explains,

Dependence connotes a state of helplessness. Behavior described as dependent implies seeking not only contact with and proximity to other persons but also help attention, and approval; what is sought and received is significant, not the person from whom it is sought or received. (p. 970)

Attachment is a term used by John Bowlby to replace dependency in his approach to theorizing why an infant connects strongly to his mother. Ainsworth (1969) declares,

“Attachment” refers to an affectional tie that one person (or animal) forms to another specific individual. Attachment is thus discriminating and specific. Like “object relations,” attachments occur at all ages and do not necessarily imply immaturity or helplessness. To be sure, the first tie is most likely to be formed to the mother, but this may soon be supplemented by attachments to a handful of other specific persons. (p. 971)

In putting together his theory of attachment, Bowlby used information which primate researchers had observed in the laboratory and the field. Hazan and Shaver (1987) explain:

When a human or primate infant is separated from its mother, the infant goes through a predictable series of emotional reactions. The first is *protest*, which involves crying, active searching, and resistance to others' soothing efforts. The second is *despair*, which is a state of passivity and obvious sadness. And the third, discussed only with reference to humans, is *detachment*, an active, seemingly defensive disregard for and avoidance of the mother if she returns. Because of the remarkable similarities between human infants and other primate

infants, Bowlby was led to consider the evolutionary significance of infant--caregiver attachment and its maintenance in the face of separation. (p. 512)

Fraley (2010) suggests that Bowlby noticed the extraordinary lengths that separated infants would go to, such as crying, clinging, and frantically searching, in order to prevent separation from their parents or to reestablish closeness to a missing parent.

Bowlby suggested that crying and searching, which he called attachment behaviors, were adaptive responses to separation from an infant's primary attachment figure which he defined as someone who provides support, protection, and care. Based on evolution, Bowlby argued that infants who were able to maintain proximity to an attachment figure through attachment behaviors would stand a greater chance of surviving to reproductive age. A motivational system, which Bowlby called attachment behavioral system, was gradually designed by natural selection to regulate nearness to an attachment figure.

Bretherton (1992) states that a major tenet of security theory is that infants and toddlers need to develop a secure dependence on their parents before they feel comfortable enough to explore unfamiliar situations. He relates that Bowlby proposed that a 2-month-old's attachment behavior consists of a number of component instinctual responses that are for the purpose of connecting the infant to the mother and the mother to the infant. Component instinctual responses include sucking, clinging, following, as well as the signaling behaviors of smiling and crying. These component responses mature independently during the first year of the infant's life, but become increasingly integrated and directed toward a mother figure during the second six months. Infants and toddlers will experience separation anxiety when their attachment figure is not available during a situation that activates escape and attachment behavior.

According to Shaver and Mikulincer (2013), the main goal of the attachment system is to maintain a sense of safety and security that is based on three things: (1) a belief that the world is generally safe; (2) that the self is worthy of love; and (3) that the attachment figure will be available and supportive in times of need. In explaining how the attachment system works, they state the following:

This system is activated by events that threaten the sense of security, such as encountering actual or symbolic threats or noticing that an attachment figure is not sufficiently near, interested, or responsive. In such cases, a person is automatically motivated to seek and reestablish actual or symbolic proximity to an attachment figure (the attachment system's primary operating strategy). These bids for proximity persist until protection and security are attained. The attachment system is then deactivated, and the person can calmly and coherently return to other activities, which Bowlby thought were motivated by other behavioral systems such as exploration and affiliation. (p. 274-275)

Ainsworth (1969) shared that Bowlby distinguished the following four main phases in the development of attachment behavior:

Phase 1, orientation and signals without discrimination of figure; Phase 2, orientation and signals directed toward one or more discriminated figures; Phase 3, maintenance of proximity to a discriminated figure by means of locomotion as well as by signals; Phase 4, formation of a reciprocal relationship. Whereas other theoretical orientations have focused on Phases 1 and 2, and on the transition between them, Bowlby's special contribution is in regard to Phases 3 and 4, especially the former. (p. 1003)

As stated by Fraley (2010), “The attachment behavior system is an important concept in attachment theory because it provides the conceptual linkage between ethological models of human development and modern theories on emotion regulation and personality” (Background, para. 3). Sable (2000) points out that an ethological perspective is unique to attachment because it emphasizes an instinctive pattern of behavior that causes the infant to seek proximity and to form an affectional bond or attachment to its caregiver, not primarily for oral needs or alimentary rewards, but for the biological function of safety and protection. Guided by ethological theory, attachment theory makes the following suggestions:

Attachment theory suggests that (a) human beings are wired to connect with one another emotionally, in intimate relationships; (b) there is a powerful influence on children’s development by the way they are treated by their parents, especially by their mothers; and (c) a theory of developmental pathways can explain later tendencies in relationship based on such early experiences. Attachment theory regards intimacy as a basic component of human nature, present in germinal form from infancy onward. Human infants are hard-wired to develop a set of behavioral patterns that, given the appropriate environment, will result in keeping close proximity to those who provide care. (Snyder et al., 2012, p. 710)

It is necessary and helpful to understand how attachment relationships differ from close relationships in general. This understanding also includes how relationship partners differ from attachment figures:

First, attachment figures are targets of proximity maintenance. Humans of all ages tend to seek and enjoy proximity to their attachment figures in times of need

and to experience distress upon separation from them. Second, attachment figures provide a physical and emotional safe haven; they facilitate distress alleviation and are a source of support and comfort. Third, attachment figures provide a secure base from which people can explore and learn about the world and develop their own capacities and personal traits. By accomplishing these functions, a relationship partner becomes a source of attachment security and one's relationship with him or her becomes an attachment bond. A fourth defining characteristic of an attachment bond is that the real or expected disappearance of an attachment figure evokes strong separation distress; that is, people react with intense distress to actual or potential separations from, or losses of, attachment figures. (Shaver and Mikulincer, 2013, p. 275-276)

As can be seen from the description above, attachment figures are special individuals that a person seeks when protection and support is needed which is what distinguishes attachment figures from ordinary relationship partners. According to Bowlby (1973), when an individual is confident that an attachment figure will be available to him whenever he desires it, that person will be much less prone to either intense or chronic fear than will an individual who for any reason lacks confidence. Confidence in the availability of attachment figures, or a lack of it, is built up slowly during the years of immaturity -- infancy, childhood, and adolescence -- and the expectations that are developed during those years tend to remain relatively unchanged throughout the rest of life.

Attachment theory does not offer the only explanation for attachment behavior. Sable (2000) asserts that, historically, attachment theory is a product of the object

relations tradition in psychoanalysis. It began with Melanie Klein and was continued by the British school of object relations theorists. Sable (2000) argues, “Bowlby broadened the object relations view, which held that an infant is naturally inclined to seek its mother, by using an ethological orientation, instead of psychic energy and drive theory, to explain why the mother is indispensable to the child” (p. 7). Nichols (2013) suggests that attachment theory emerged as a leading tool for describing the deeper roots of close relationships due to family therapists showing a renewed interest in the inner life of individuals who make up the family. Family systems theory views people as a product of their context meaning that a person’s behavior is powerfully influenced by interactions with other family members. While having similar views, there are some differences between family systems theory and attachment theory:

(a) Attachment theory is focused on dynamics involving protection, care, and felt security, whereas family systems theory is concerned with family dynamics, involving structures, roles, communication patterns, boundaries, and power relations; (b) attachment theory is focused on the dyad, with much of the action occurring within individuals (e.g., “internal working models”), whereas family systems theory is focused on the triad, with much of the action occurring within groups; (c) attachment theory is relatively more concerned with children and development, whereas family systems theory is relatively more concerned with adults and current functioning; and (d) attachment theory has historically relied primarily on empirical research with normal populations, whereas family systems theory relies primarily on case studies involving clinic populations. (Rothbaum, Rosen, Ujiiie, and Uchida, 2002, p.329)

Just as there are differences, there are also similarities between attachment theory and family systems theory. van Ecke et al. (2006) explain that Bowen, who developed family systems theory, wrote his theory from the same general perspective that Bowlby wrote his theory on attachment. Both theories are based on the assumption that individuals are a product of evolution and that human behavior is significantly regulated by the same natural processes that regulate the behavior of all other living things. Both also suggest that patterns of responding in relationships are intergenerational. The authors note some other parallels between Bowen's theory and Bowlby's theory:

Bowen viewed the family as an organic system which is held in balance by the opposing forces of togetherness and separation. The goal is for the individual to become autonomous within the system, which he calls differentiated.

Togetherness forces can be viewed as similar to the safety seeking behavior in Bowlby's attachment theory. The desire for separation in Bowen's theory can be seen as analogous to the desire to explore in Bowlby's theory. In attachment theory the healthy individual maintains a balance between the pull towards togetherness and the push towards separation, which state is called differentiated in Murray Bowen's Family Systems theory. This state would be called secure in John Bowlby's attachment theory when the individual can manage to resolve the anxiety generated by the activated attachment system. (van Ecke et al., 2006, p. 84)

Attachment Types

In the 1960s a developmental psychologist named Mary Ainsworth took attachment theory to a new level. She devised what has come to be known as the

“Strange Situation” procedure (Wallin, 2007). Ainsworth found a way to assess the mother-child interaction using direct observation and methodical rating to measure the emotional impact that parents have on their children. Her research provided support for Bowlby’s evolving theory by not only showing that the quality of attachment relationships could be measured, but also that parenting skills had lasting effects on personality (Sable, 2000). The Strange Situation is a twenty-minute structured laboratory observation that involved separation and reunion behaviors in one-year-olds. Bretherton (1992) explains that mother and infant are introduced to a laboratory playroom, where they are later joined by an unfamiliar woman. While the stranger plays with the baby, the mother leaves briefly and then she returns. A second separation occurs which leaves the baby completely alone. After a brief period, the stranger and then the mother return. Ainsworth discovered that infants explored the playroom and toys more eagerly in the presence of their mothers than after a stranger entered or when the mother was absent. Secure children were more easily comforted and able to continue exploring the room after the two brief separations than insecure children.

The Strange Situation helped Ainsworth to identify the kind of parent-child interactions that are most likely to cause secure attachment or various types of insecure attachment. She discovered that the primary cause for security or insecurity had to do with the patterns of communication between caregiver and infant (Wallin, 2007). The significance of Ainsworth’s research is described by Fraley (2010):

Ainsworth's work was important for at least three reasons. First, she provided one of the first empirical demonstrations of how attachment behavior is patterned in both safe and frightening contexts. Second, she provided the first empirical

taxonomy of individual differences in infant attachment patterns. According to her research, at least three types of children exist: those who are secure in their relationship with their parents, those who are anxious-resistant, and those who are anxious-avoidant. Finally, she demonstrated that these individual differences were correlated with infant-parent interactions in the home during the first year of life. Children who appear secure in the strange situation, for example, tend to have parents who are responsive to their needs. Children who appear insecure in the strange situation (i.e., anxious-resistant or avoidant) often have parents who are insensitive to their needs, or inconsistent or rejecting in the care they provide. (Individual Differences in Infant Attachment Patterns, para. 2)

Bretherton (1992) notes that two concepts originate with Ainsworth: (1) the concept of the attachment figure as a secure base from which the infant can explore the world; and (2) the concept of maternal sensitivity to infant signals and its role in the development of infant-mother attachment patterns. Kirkpatrick (2005) says, “mothers of secure infants are characterized by sensitive and appropriate responding to the infants’ signals of distress and attempt to gain and maintain proximity” (p. 36). Snyder et al. (2012) add that “the mother in this pattern can nourish the child physically and emotionally, she will comfort him when he is distressed, and she will reassure him when he is frightened. She will be there for her child when called upon” (p. 710). Mothers of avoidant infants rebuff their infants’ attempts for connection and fail to be psychologically or physically available when needed. Mothers of anxious babies are characterized by their unpredictable and insensitive response to their infant’s signals.

They are inconsistent with their availability when closeness is desired, and can be intrusive at inappropriate times (Kirkpatrick, 2005).

According to Snyder et al. (2012), these various styles of attachment are influenced by a mother's personal experiences, specifically with her own parents. Therefore, it is possible that the influence from mother to child begins as early as the prenatal stage. They argue that the fact that many children show attachment patterns similar to their mothers' has given rise to the concept of "intergenerational transmission" of attachment styles. In other words, mothers interact with their infants in much the same way as their mothers interacted with them. As a result, they pass on the same type of attachment pattern.

Internal Working Models

"The theoretical link between maternal behavior and infant patterns of attachment is Bowlby's notion of internal working models of attachment" (Kirkpatrick, 2005, p. 38). According to Bowlby (1973),

Each individual builds working models of the world and of himself in it, with the aid of which he perceives events, forecasts the future, and constructs his plans. In the working model of the world that anyone builds, a key feature is his notion of who his attachment figures are, where they may be found, and how they may be expected to respond. Similarly, in the working model of the self that anyone builds a key feature is his notion of how acceptable or unacceptable he himself is in the eyes of his attachment figures. On the structure of these complementary models are based that person's forecasts of how accessible and responsive his attachment figures are likely to be should he turn to them for support. And, in

terms of the theory now advanced, it is on the structure of those models that depends, also, whether he feels confident that his attachment figures are in general readily available or whether he is more or less afraid that they will not be available -- occasionally, frequently, or most of the time. (p. 203)

In essence, working models provide the answer to the child's question: "Can I count on my attachment figure to be available and responsive when I need her?" A "yes" answer results in a secure attachment style, a "no" answer results in an avoidant attachment style, and a "maybe" answer results in an anxious attachment style (Kirkpatrick, 2005). van Eecke et al (2006) explain it in more detail by stating,

The caregiver provides the behavior from which the infant draws conclusions. If our emotions and needs are recognized and accepted, we have a secure attachment. If they are not, we still learn to form relationships, but the internal working model for them is altered. If our emotions and needs are rejected, we learn to reject them too ourselves, and we form an avoidant attachment. If our parent at times is needier than giving, we form a preoccupied attachment. We over focus on the other, and we worry. If the very attachment figure on whom our survival depends leaves us, turns against us, or is frightening on a recurring basis, we are in a catch-22 situation in which the only source we have for safety and survival is now also the source of our fear or grief. We then form an internal working model that is called disorganized attachment. (p. 87)

Pietromonaco and Barrett (2000) assert that the internal working models concept is the cornerstone of attachment theory. Attachment theory assumes that humans form close emotional bonds in order to survive. These bonds result in the development and

maintenance of mental representations of the self and others also known as internal working models. These working models help individuals predict and understand their environment, engage in survival promoting behaviors such as proximity maintenance, and establish a sense of felt security. In other words, internal working models shape the individual. As stated by van Eecke et al. (2006), “the mental picture of our attachment relationships are with us throughout our lifetime” (p.83). As a matter of fact, “Bowlby (1979) claimed that mental representations of the self and others, formed in the context of the child-caregiver relationship, carry forward and influence thought, feeling, and behavior in adult relationships” (Pietromonaco and Barrett, 2000, p. 155).

Adult Attachment

Since mental representations of the self and others continue to operate into adulthood, it should come as no surprise that “the internal working models concept is the foundation for understanding how attachment processes operate in adult relationships” (Pietromonaco and Barrett, 2000, p. 155). The attachment system is most critical during the early years of life. Yet, Bowlby assumed that it is active over the entire life span and especially within relational bonds in adulthood (Shaver and Mikulincer, 2013). Bowlby (1969/1982) wrote, “that attachment behaviour in adult life is a straightforward continuation of attachment behaviour in childhood is shown by the circumstances that lead an adult's attachment behaviour to become more readily elicited” (p. 207). The adult relationship where attachment behaviors is witnessed the most is the relationship between romantic partners.

According to Shaver and Mikulincer (2013) “there is ample evidence that romantic relationships can be viewed as attachments and that a mate is often one’s

principal attachment figure” (p. 277). Fraley and Shaver (2000) point out that “according to romantic attachment theory, many of the behaviors and dynamics that characterize romantic relationships are driven by the same motivational system (the attachment behavioral system) that regulates attachment behavior in infancy” (p. 140). In other words, a person's attachment style as an adult is shaped by interactions with his parental attachment figures (Fraley, 2010). Leading researchers on adult romantic attachment, Hazan and Shaver (1987), explain as follows:

Key components of attachment theory, developed by Bowlby, Ainsworth, and others to explain the development of affectional bonds in infancy, were translated into terms appropriate to adult romantic love. The translation centered on the three major styles of attachment in infancy--secure, avoidant, and anxious/ambivalent—and on the notion that continuity of relationship style is due in part to mental models (Bowlby's "inner working models") of self and social life. These models, and hence a person's attachment style, are seen as determined in part by childhood relationships with parents. Two questionnaire studies indicated that (a) relative prevalence of the three attachment styles is roughly the same in adulthood as in infancy, (b) the three kinds of adults differ predictably in the way they experience romantic love, and (c) attachment style is related in theoretically meaningful ways to mental models of self and social relationships and to relationship experiences with parents. (p.511)

Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) proposed a four-category model of attachment styles in adulthood based on combinations of a person's self-image (positive or negative)

and image of others (positive or negative). According to Pietromonaco and Barrett (2000),

People who hold positive models of the self and others fit the *secure* prototype and report feeling comfortable with closeness and intimacy. People who hold negative models of both the self and others fit the *fearful-avoidant* prototype and report both a fear of and a desire for closeness. People who hold a negative model of the self and a positive model of others fit the *preoccupied* prototype and are characterized by a desire for a high level of closeness and by their fear of abandonment. Finally, people who report a positive model of the self but a negative model of others fit the *dismissing-avoidant* prototype and report being uncomfortable with closeness and overly self-reliant. (p. 157)

Shaver and Mikulincer (2013) not only argue that there's a connection between childhood attachment and adult attachment, but also that both relationships involve reliance on a partner to serve the attachment-related needs for a safe haven and secure base. They state,

Love in both infancy and adulthood includes eye contact, holding, touching, caressing, smiling, crying, clinging; a desire to be comforted by one's relationship partner when distressed; the experience of anger, anxiety, and sorrow following separation or loss; and the experience of happiness and joy upon reunion. Moreover, formation of a secure relationship with either a primary caregiver or a mate depends on the caregiver's or partner's responsiveness to the attached person's bids for proximity, and this responsiveness causes the attached person to feel safer, more confident, happier, more outgoing, and kinder to others.

Furthermore, in both kinds of relationships, when the partner is not available and not responsive to the person's bids for proximity, the attached person can become anxious, preoccupied, and hypersensitive to signs of love, approval, or rejection. Separations or nonresponsiveness, up to a point, can increase the intensity of both an infant's and an adult's proximity seeking behavior, but beyond that point they can instigate defensive distancing from the partner so as to avoid the pain and distress of repeated frustration. All of these parallels led Shaver et al. to conclude that infants' bonds with parents and romantic partners' bonds in adulthood are variants of a single underlying process. (p.277)

Hazan and Shaver (1987) also report that adults who were secure in their romantic relationships were more likely to remember their childhood relationships with parents as being affectionate, caring, and accepting. Thus, the evidence reveals that security in the child-parent relationship influences the romantic relationship.

One type of assessment for adult attachment is done by asking questions about the client's family make up and history, and creating what is often called a genogram (van Eecke et al., 2006). Genograms can be helpful to therapists because they show family members and their relationships to one another (Nichols, 2013). Genograms include the following information:

Different types of relationships, significant events and conflicts are indicated in the diagram. One records family members' ages, deaths, divorces, remarriages, births, adoptions, abortions and miscarriages. Males are on the left, represented by a square, females on the right represented by a circle. Siblings are noted on the line below that, starting with the oldest from left to right. Relationship

dysfunction is shown by upward and downward facing arrows for over and under functioning partners. (van Ecke et al., 2006, pp. 94-95)

All this information is recorded on a genogram for at least three generations (Nichols, 2013). Therefore, Van Ecke et al. (2006) state,

Creating a genogram can take a long time, but it reveals intergenerational family patterns and makes them conscious to the client. It also shows which responses to anxiety tend to predominate in the client's family, such as binge drinking, having extramarital affairs, depression, and anger or cutting off relationships. (p. 95)

Treatment

One of the most researched approaches to couple therapy is called Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT) which was developed by Dr. Susan Johnson. Dalglish, Johnson, Burgess Moser, Lafontaine, Weibe, and Tasca (2015a) report that “Emotionally focused couple therapy is an empirically validated approach to couple therapy based in attachment theory. It has a demonstrated 70–73% recovery rate for relationship distress, with 90% significant improvement over controls” (p. 276). These same authors report that follow-up studies by other researchers have demonstrated that 60–70% of couples either maintained or increased their relationship satisfaction gains 3 months to 2 years posttherapy. Couples who completed EFT reported higher levels of intimacy at posttherapy than couples who were assigned to a waiting list control group or completed behavioral couple therapy (Burgess Moser, Johnson, Dalglish, Lafontaine, Weibe, and Tasca, 2016).

According to Johnson (2004), EFT views partners as having a natural need for emotional contact and security. It assumes that the negative emotions and negative

interaction cycle of distressed couples represent a struggle for attachment security.

Dalgleish et al. (2015a) add that the negative cycle is an attempt to cope with separation distress and to change the partners' responses to reflect an increased accessibility and responsiveness. Since attachment theory proposes that accessibility and responsiveness are the building blocks of secure attachment bonds between partners, EFT aims to create more secure bonding events through couples exploring and expressing their emotional needs and wants associated with the loss of connection, and also create increased accessibility and responsiveness between couples.

Every session of EFT focuses on the change processes required to build safe emotional connection in a way that helps soothe attachment fears for couples, regardless of initial attachment anxiety levels. This includes partners exploring, accessing, and reprocessing their emotions and attachment longings with one another (Dalgleish et al., 2015a). The process of change in EFT targets one of the most common negative interaction cycle displayed by distressed couples known as the blame-withdraw cycle. In a blame-withdraw cycle one partner blames and pursues for contact, while the other dismisses and stonewalls, which causes more blame from the first partner. This cycle leaves both partners' attachment needs unmet, which creates insecurity and feelings of rejection (Dalgleish, Johnson, Burgess Moser, Weibe, and Tasca, 2015b).

EFT uses a systemic and attachment framework to understand this cycle and move the couple toward blame-softening. According to Dalgleish et al. (2015b), "The blamer-softening is an event in which partners access their attachment-related needs and longings and express these in a highly emotionally engaged and affiliative manner to their partner" (p. 262). Johnson (2004) states that in order for blame softening to be

considered successful, both partners must change their perception of, and behavior toward, their partner. Burgess Moser et al. (2016) report the following:

Process research in EFT demonstrates that couples who complete blamer softening are more likely to display higher levels of emotional experiencing and expression, greater attuned responsiveness, and move out of relationship distress at the end of EFT than couples who do not achieve this change event. (p.233)

Dalgleish et al. (2015a) explain the benefit of EFT by stating,

Key findings suggest that the interventions in EFT work particularly well for individuals with higher initial levels of attachment anxiety and emotional control. EFT may help to reorganize attachment anxiety and ambiguous affect and help couples learn to express their emotions, and turn to their significant other to feel relief, hope, and a deeper connection. Through the therapeutic process, EFT confirms what these individuals are looking for and helps them to develop more positive regulation strategies by learning to express their emotions and attachment longings and needs. (p. 288)

In a nutshell, using attachment theory, EFT seeks to foster attachment security, emotional control, and relationship trust that results in a strong attachment bond between couples over the course of therapy.

CHAPTER 4

CASE STUDY

Family Introduction

The case study in this chapter examines an African-American family consisting of a married couple and their two adult children. Wayne is 63 years-old and Crystal is 61 years-old. They have been married for 38 years and have two adult children. Wayne and Crystal met when he came to her church to preach for a youth service. A year after they started dating, Wayne and Crystal got married. They were married for 10 years before they had their first child after two miscarriages. The oldest child is their son, Randy, who is 28 years-old. The youngest child is their daughter, Brenda, who is 25-years-old. Each member of the family agreed to be participants in this case study in order for this author to fulfill the requirements for the Doctor of Ministry program.

This case study examines the impact that family of origin attachments have on a marriage relationship. The couple in this case study was experiencing a level of dissatisfaction in their home which often resulted in tension in their marriage. The root cause of the dissatisfaction was determined to be related to family of origin attachments. Expectations in the new family were based on family of origin beliefs and practices. The couple's different expectations impacted the entire family in this case study, but the greatest impact was on the marriage relationship causing an emotional disconnect between husband and wife. Therefore, the therapist focused the therapy sessions on couple therapy in order to reestablish the emotional bond between husband and wife. The therapist met with the children to gather information and discuss family dynamics.

Wayne reports being frustrated because he feels that cleaning the home is not a priority for his wife and children. He says that clutter frustrates him so he wants things in the house to be neat and organized. It gives him a peace of mind and he feels a sense of control when he walks into a house that is clean. On the other hand, he feels a loss of control when the house is unclean. An unclean house reminds him of his mother's house which he associates with her disorganized life while a clean house reminds him of his roots at his grandmother's house which he associates with stability. He wants to maintain his roots and having an unclean house makes him feel like he cannot get back to his roots. Wayne views the origin of the problem as having children. He feels that having children took away his wife's time to make housework a priority. Like it was in his family of origin, he feels that Sundays should be housecleaning day. He goes to work on Sundays, but when he returns home, the house is still not clean. Wayne has a hard time understanding why the house was not cleaned when his wife and children do not work on Sundays and, therefore, are home all day which means they are able to do housecleaning. The fact that his children do not make sure the house is clean makes him feel as though they do not understand nor appreciate fully the sacrifice that has been made to provide them with a better upbringing than he had.

Crystal reports being frustrated with her husband's nagging and isolation. He nags about the house not being clean, but she does not like to clean. She was the "princess" growing up and, therefore, never had to do housecleaning. Since her husband is good at housecleaning, she feels he should do it or allow her to hire someone to clean their home. Yet he refuses to clean the house himself because he works on Sundays, and he refuses to allow her to hire someone because his grandmother had to work hard

cleaning other peoples' homes and he does not want to have someone else work hard to clean his home. Crystal does not clean the home on Sundays because in her family of origin, Sundays were family day so she uses Sundays to rest and spend time with their children while Wayne is at work. She feels Wayne wants her to be like his grandmother when dealing with the children and assign housecleaning tasks. Since she has not done so, she feels he continually nags. He also isolates himself when he comes home from work. While she and the children are in the family room watching T.V. or playing games, he stays in their bedroom watching T.V. separately. Wayne says that the reason for his isolation from the rest of the household is because after a hard day's work, he wants to settle down and destress. He says the kind of T.V. shows and movies that his wife and children enjoy watching creates anxiety for him and, therefore, makes it difficult for him to destress. He likes to watch sports and comedy shows or movies while the rest of the family likes to watch action or drama movies. His isolation has to do with entertainment choices rather than personal feelings.

Background and History

Wayne

Wayne was born at his maternal grandparents' home in Greensboro, AL. He spent the first six years of his life in Alabama. His grandparents raised him along with his uncle who is three years younger than him. He refers to his uncle as his brother. Wayne considers his grandparents as his parents. They raised him, supported him, sacrificed for him to get through school, and provided a religious foundation for him. He gets warm feelings when he thinks about his grandparents and how they raised him. Wayne's grandmother cleaned houses for a living. He remembers her to be a hard-

working lady who did whatever it took to take care of her family. She assigned Wayne and his uncle the task of keeping the house clean. Every Sunday was housecleaning day. Wayne states, "I felt closest to my grandmother growing up." Wherever his grandmother went, he went. He recalls the time when his mother wanted him to live with her during his high school years, but he declined because he did not want to leave his grandmother.

While his grandmother was nurturing, Wayne's grandfather was a disciplinarian. Wayne states, "one look was all it took." The rules of the house were: you could not talk back. When adults were talking, children come to attention. He recalls how his uncle was stubborn growing up and, therefore, would get many whippings; but Wayne would give his grandfather what he wanted in order to avoid a whipping including fake tears. "I wouldn't call him abusive," says Wayne, "just very strict." Wayne learned what it means to be a man, and how to take care of the family from his grandfather. His grandfather was discriminated against so he made a living doing odd jobs such as gardening, building fences, hauling wood. He did whatever he could to feed his family. Wayne remembers his grandfather's days as a butcher. His grandfather was hotheaded and as a result had to stop working at his butcher job. One day someone shot at his grandfather. Wayne believes it was out of jealousy because his grandfather was able to still make money after losing his job as a butcher. Wayne understood that both his grandparents worked hard to put food on the table. He says, "I understood at a young age how hard my grandparents had to work for their money."

Wayne never lived with his biological mother or father. His mother was in nursing school when he was born. She went back to school after he was born, and when she finished school, she married his stepfather. His mother and stepfather moved to

California. His stepfather was a heavy drinker. According to Wayne, the only reason his mother stayed married to him was because she was determined to hang in there. He doesn't have the proof, but he feels that his stepfather was abusive to his mother. His mother and stepfather had two children together – a son and daughter. Wayne's younger brother is two years younger than he. His sister is nine years younger than he. Unlike him, his brother and sister were raised in the home with his mother. He has a close relationship with his brother, but he and his sister are not as close. He has memories of hurt and pain when he thinks of his sister. She had her first child at the age of 13 and the father of her child is his father's nephew. Wayne states, "she never got a chance to be a kid herself." Yet despite becoming a mother at a young age, his sister was determined to finish high school. Today his sister is a nurse, and she credits Wayne as her motivation for finishing school. When Wayne was half way through first grade, his grandmother became ill. Wayne, his uncle, and grandparents all moved to California to stay with Wayne's mom. They lived with his mom and stepfather until his grandmother recovered and was back on her feet. Since he was living in the same city as his mom, he would visit her on the weekend. When he was 15 years-old, his mother moved from California to Tuscaloosa, AL.

During his six years in Alabama, Wayne remembers his biological father coming to Alabama on several occasions. His father would pick him up and take him to his paternal grandparents' home. When Wayne moved to California, he lost contact with his father for about six years. He remembers going on vacation with his grandparents to Alabama to visit his mother. His mother took him to visit his dad's sister. His aunt knew that Wayne had not spoken to his father in 6 years so she made him call his father and

that is how he and his father reconnected. His father lived in Cleveland, OH, and he wanted Wayne to visit him in Cleveland. Wayne rode the Greyhound bus from Los Angeles, CA to Cleveland, OH. He was 13 years-old when he took his first trip to visit his dad and that began a pattern over the next four years of him visiting his dad in Cleveland every summer. Wayne reports that life in Dad's house was good with the exception of his relationship with his father's wife. His stepmother had a drinking problem. When she would get drunk, she would get angry and pick a fight with his father. On one occasion when she got drunk, she demanded that his father send him back to California. His father's wife had a daughter from a previous relationship. Wayne's stepsister is a year older than he. He confesses that it hurt him to know that his father could raise a child that was not his biological child, but he could not raise his own biological child.

Looking back on his childhood, Wayne reflects on how both his mom and dad married people who had drinking problems. He feels his grandparents knew he was better off with them than staying with either of his parents. He comments, "my grandparents provided a level of stability for me." Wayne says he was an easy going kid growing up. He had no desire to disappoint his grandparents. He stayed in high school because he saw the sacrifices that his grandparents made for him. Neither one of his grandparents finished junior high school so they did not have the academic background to give to him. All they could do was motivate him to go further than they did. As a result, he completed his college education. He says what shaped his personality was the awareness of the struggle that his grandparents went through when they moved to California just to put food on the table. He was aware that money did not come easy. It

came from the sweat off his grandparents' backs. He has adopted the same work ethic that he saw from his grandfather. His religious life is influenced by his grandmother. She started taking him to church when he was a teenager. He remembers spending his teenage years always in church.

Wayne does wrestle with certain feelings from his childhood. He was disappointed to find out that his grandfather had two sets of children. What disappointed him the most was the fact that his grandfather raised him, yet had children that he did not raise which reminded Wayne of his father who raised a stepdaughter, but not his own biological son. He was frustrated with his dad because they did not have a father-son relationship. Since his grandparents were raising him, Wayne feels his father felt he did not need to provide for his own son. He recalls a time when he visited his father and he overheard his father joking with some friends about whether or not Wayne was really his son. Wayne says it hurt him to hear his father say that about him. The absence of a father-son relationship caused him to have self-esteem issues. He lacked confidence while growing up. On the flip side, it caused him to decide to be there for his children. He made the decision that he would be there for his children, they would grow up under his roof, and he would provide for them. Since his parents were not there for him, it became his goal to be there for his children. He struggled with trying to understand how his mother would not come and get her child once she finished school, got married, and settled into her home. The bright spot in his childhood was his grandmother's love. Reflecting on his grandmother, he states, "grandmother's love was a special kind of love." He could always sit and talk to his grandmother. He recalls how family members

wanted him to identify himself as a son of his biological mother and father, but he refused because in his heart he was the son of his grandparents.

Wayne reports that he experienced normal physical development while growing up. As an adult, he realizes he has been impacted emotionally by his childhood. Not living with his parents did not bother him while growing up, but as he got older, he developed strong emotions about not living with his parents. He also notices a deep attachment to his grandfather. His grandfather gave him several items such as tools when Wayne became an adult. He still has these items and they have strong sentimental value to him. Wayne is the opposite of his grandfather when it comes to expressing himself. He does not enjoy confrontation. As a matter of fact, he tries to avoid it. He says his grandfather would tell people how he felt. In contrast, Wayne is always concerned about people's feelings. He believes he takes after his grandmother in this area because if she could not say anything good about someone, she would not say anything at all. He recalls a situation with his daughter, Brenda, where she was under attack at school. He was not there to protect her or fight on her behalf as she needed him to because he does not like confrontation. He now lives with the regret of not doing what a father should do to protect his daughter. When she needed him the most, he was not there for her.

Wayne was a shy and quiet guy while growing up which impacted his social life. His best friend was his stepfather's nephew who was the same age as Wayne. Wayne and his best friend experimented with many things such as drinking beer. He says their relationship changed when he started going to church. Wayne was 15 years-old when his grandmother began taking him to church. He made many friends at church. Church was the center of his social life. He joined various youth groups, literature evangelism

groups, choirs, and Bible study groups. His church life was so influential that when he began college, he wanted to be an architect, but that changed when he started attending a youth group Bible study at church. The Bible study focused on last day events, and it scared him so much that he decided to switch from being an architect to a theology major. Wayne went on his first date when he was in junior high, but he says his first serious date was around the age of 15-16 years-old. He dated briefly while in college, but eventually he laid eyes on a young lady at church named Crystal. Wayne knew immediately that she would be his wife and sure enough they became husband and wife.

Wayne graduated from a Christian College in Huntsville, AL with a Bachelor of Arts in Theology and a minor in Critical Studies. Wayne is currently working on a certificate in Graphic Information Systems. He has worked a variety of jobs including the following: Three years in the Employment Development Department; three years developing packaging instructions for spare parts; Eighteen years as a packaging engineer for two companies; and for the last 15 years, he has worked as a driving instructor.

Crystal

Crystal is the middle child of three children born to her parents. She had an older brother, Donald Jr., who was born two years before her in 1953. Between 5-7 months, he contracted what could have possibly been meningitis because he had water in the brain and his head started growing and growing. Donald Jr. died when he was seven months old. She had a younger brother, Daryl, who was born with severe cerebral palsy. He did not come down the birth canal and doctors were not able to get him out until it was too late. Daryl could not walk or talk. He was like a baby his entire life. Daryl was not expected to live past 5 years-old, yet he died in 1998 at the age of 41 years-old. Crystal

was the only child who turned out to be, as she puts it, “okay.” She says she always felt that God expected a lot from her because he let her be “okay.” She wanted to know, “why?” Why did God allow her to be “okay,” and not her two brothers? She would often ask God, “What do you want me to do?” Crystal says that having her brother in the family made her aware that she did not have to be normal. His condition taught her that people were not always “okay.”

Her brother’s condition not only impacted the family in general, it had a strong impact on Crystal’s childhood. Her family did not go places a lot because of her little brother. She can recall only one trip as a child. Crystal and her parents took a trip to Huntsville, AL to visit her maternal grandmother who was dying of cancer. Her parents wanted her to see her grandmother before she passed away. Crystal’s aunt, who lived with them at the time, stayed behind to care for her brother. Crystal and her parents rode the train from Los Angeles, CA to Huntsville, AL. Crystal remembers the trip as being a lot of fun. She never went out to eat inside of a restaurant with her parents as a child because of her brother’s condition. Instead, they would go to places where they could eat in the car. The same with going to the movie theaters. They would go to the drive-in instead. It wasn’t until her brother was placed in a facility that Crystal and her parents started doing activities together as a family. They started taking trips and mini vacations. They would go to dinner in a restaurant every Sunday. Crystal says that’s when her family life started to feel normal.

Crystal and her parents moved from Huntsville, AL to California when she was four years-old. Her maternal aunt came to live with them, and she helped to take care of Crystal and her little brother. Crystal shared a bedroom with her aunt. As a result, they

developed a strong bond which was stronger than the bond Crystal had with her mother. Her mother was always busy caring for her little brother so Crystal grew closer and closer to her aunt. Her aunt took her everywhere which made Crystal feel like she was her aunt's daughter. She says that her aunt made her feel valued. Her mom called her "a dumb little child," but her aunt talked to her like an adult. While her brother was at home, Crystal's parents did not attend church. Her aunt was the first person to take her to church. She really liked church so she would go to church often with her aunt. When she was 17 years-old, Crystal joined the church her aunt attended because of her aunt's influence. Crystal's parents had started attending church when her brother was placed in a facility. Her parents were angry when she joined her aunt's church because it was a different denomination than their church. Her aunt lived with her for most of Crystal's childhood. Her aunt moved out when she got married, but Crystal did not like her aunt's husband. She says he changed her. The marriage was not a good marriage; therefore, it did not last. Her aunt moved back with Crystal and her parents, but she was not the sweet aunt that she was before; instead, she was bitter.

Crystal's parents were dominating, and she was submissive so she never clashed with her parents while growing up. She recalls only getting a spanking once for writing on the walls, but after that, she never did it again. Her parents told her that they felt she would probably hit her little brother if they were not looking so she believes that she was probably jealous of her brother, but she does not remember feeling like she ever wanted to hit him. What she remembers is playing with her brother. She loved to play with him because she would always make him laugh. As a child, Crystal felt closer to her dad than her mom because he had time for her. When her brother was at home, her mom was

always caring for him so Crystal would spend time with her dad. When her brother was put in a facility, her mom worked as a teacher during the day and attended school at night which left Crystal spending a lot more time with her dad. Her dad worked as a chemist. She recalls that Sundays were the only day she felt like she could see who her father truly was. Monday through Saturday her father would drink scotch, but on Sundays he would not drink; therefore, Crystal did not have to look through the alcohol to see her father.

Crystal had a complicated relationship with her mom while growing up. She and her mom spent very little time together while Crystal's brother was at home. She remembers having disagreements with her mom about her school clothes. She felt her mom wanted to dress her too old. When Crystal objected to her mother's choice of clothing, she felt her mom was not nice with the way she told her, "No." The constant disagreements with her mother and the negative response from her mother made Crystal gravitate closer to her dad and aunt. Her relationship with her mother did not get better until her brother was placed in a facility. Her mother was able to focus on her so that they could start building a relationship. It was a slow process because after her brother was put in a facility, her mother became really busy. She got a job as a county clerk and eventually became a teacher. She taught elementary school and Jr. High during the day, but she wanted to be a nurse so she attended school at night. Once she completed her bachelor's degree, she continued going to school for her Master's degree. This left Crystal once again spending more time with her dad than mom. Crystal also feels that her mother's job as a teacher changed her. She says her mother started becoming mean at home because of the children she taught at school. This not only drove Crystal closer to her dad, but it also made her not want to be a teacher. Crystal did have many fun times

with her parents while growing up. Her fondest memories were during Christmas. She says that time of year was a lot of fun. She also remembers Sundays as being a fun day. On Sundays she and her parents would tape themselves singing hymns at home. They would also go to the facility to visit her brother on Sundays.

Crystal's physical development was that of a normal girl. She had a vivid imagination like most children. She says she lived in a fantasy world in which she would make up stories on a daily basis and act them out. She would also tell her stories to family and friends. She started creating stories when she was eight years-old and she continued to do so until she turned 18 years-old. One challenge for her growing up was relating to her peers. She grew up thinking adults were her playmates because there were several people in her apartment complex who would always play with her. She became more comfortable with adults than with children her own age. She admits that she could not relate to children her age because she was always around adults. She could only relate to her close friends. She struggled with being honest to her friends about her feelings because she was afraid they would get mad at her. She would have episodes where she would blow up at them for no reason because she had been holding her feelings in for too long.

As a young girl, Crystal wanted to be an actress, but she changed her mind at around the age of five or six. She decided she wanted to be a doctor so that she could help people. She eventually changed her mind about being a doctor once she observed her friend go through the process of being a doctor. She watched her friend sacrifice everything – no children, no marriage – just to be a doctor. Crystal said she was not willing to make that kind of sacrifice to be a doctor. She was passionate about two things

as a kid. The first thing was instruments. She loved playing instruments. She played the violin until she was in junior high. She played in orchestras. She says she wanted to play the piano, but her parents would not buy her one so she settled for whatever instrument she could play. Her second passion was modern dancing. She started dancing in fourth grade and continued through high school. She participated in dance competitions. She says dancing gave her confidence. Her grade school years were good years. It wasn't until she was in college that she experienced her first major disappointment. Throughout grade school she was used to getting all A's in her classes, but in college she realized that she was not as smart as she thought she was. She admits that she struggled with science and did not get many A's in her major. When she received a C- for a grade, it affected her to the point that she got physically sick.

Teachers were important to Crystal throughout her school years. Her teachers would take her and other girls to math clubs, track meets, and other events. She felt her relationship with her teachers gave her an outlet to do activities that she would not have otherwise been able to do because her parents were so busy taking care of her brother. She remembers a teacher she had in Junior high that would take her and other girls bowling and to her home for fun activities. She considered herself a teacher's pet in school. She believed her teachers were her friends; therefore, she felt an allegiance to her teachers more so than to her peers. The one thing she could not handle was being hollered at. She recounts how she was devastated the first time a teacher hollered at her. She was not one to get into trouble at home or at school. She claims she did not have a lot of peer pressure. The only peer pressure she can remember was when she made the decision to go to a carnival after school rather than go straight home. During her high

school years, she learned that it was not worth her trying to be bad because every time she made plans to do the wrong thing, her dad would show up as if he knew what she had planned.

Crystal's first date was her prom date when she was 17 years-old. She continued to date him after the prom, but their relationship ended a year later. She had a few brief relationships after that time, but she did not have serious relationship again until her senior year in college. She started dating a farmer that she met through one of her friends. The farmer was her friend's cousin, and he lived in Michigan while Crystal lived in California. He would travel back and forth from Michigan to California so that they could spend time together. She says he was a really nice gentleman. He wined and dined her. He would send her flowers. He was everything that she thought she wanted in a man. He wanted to marry her, but Crystal was hesitant about marrying him for two reasons. First reason was because she did not want to be a farmer's wife. The second reason was because she really was not in love with him. Yet she got engaged to him anyway. While engaged to the farmer, Crystal met her husband, Wayne, when he came to her church to preach a youth service. He later told her that it was her smile that drew him to her, and he revealed to her that the Lord told him that Crystal would be his wife. When she told her parents about Wayne, they were happy and encouraged her to date him because they did not want her to live on a farm. She was 22 years-old when she met Wayne and a year later at the age of 23, she was married to Wayne. Crystal shared that her husband does not like to hear about her dating life before him. It bothers him to hear about her ex-boyfriends and for that reason, she has never shared with him her entire previous dating history. She has shared bits and pieces with him, but he gets very upset

whenever the topic comes up. She believes he can't handle the idea of her with another man and that's why he does not want to hear about it.

One of the key landmarks in her life was having children. She and her husband were married for 10 years before they had their first child, but they started trying after five years. Her first pregnancy resulted in a miscarriage after eight weeks due to fibroid tumors on the outside of her uterus. She was 28 years-old at the time, and she miscarried on the doctor's table. She and her husband tried again a year later, but once again she lost the baby. She says it was the most grief she had ever experienced, and it led to her having "periods of depression." The third attempt was finally successful and at age 33, she gave birth to her first child. She gave birth to her son, Randy who she considers a miracle child. Crystal states that having her first child changed her relationship with her mother. When she had her son, she began having nightmares about her mother. Her mother "drove her crazy" because she feared that her grandson would turn out like Crystal's brothers. Therefore, her mother would continually call to ask questions. She would constantly tell Crystal that she was not doing things right and did not know what she was doing. She says that her mom was not her cheerleader. As a result, Crystal would have nightmares about her mom. When she told her mom about the nightmares, her mom attempted to ease up on her concern. Three years later at the age of 36, Crystal gave birth to her second child. She had a daughter which she named Brenda. When her daughter was born, Crystal's mother did not have the same concerns about her as she did about her grandson.

Crystal reports that she was a hypochondriac as a child and her mother would take her to the doctor every time she said, "ouch." She began having her menstrual cycle at

the age of 12. She developed breasts within the normal range for a female. When it came to sex, she had to learn about it through her relationships. Her parents did not talk to her about sex education and neither did anyone else. The only thing her mother told her was that necking was going too far, but by the time her mother told her that, Crystal had already gone too far by that definition. Crystal has a number of medical issues. She suffers from flat feet and hammer toe which has caused her pain since she was 12 years-old. She had surgery on her feet twice – once for bunions and once for hammer toe. She has had her tubes tied. She has severe fibroids, but she says they do not bother her. She recently found out that she has a calcified tumor. She had a body scan and found out she had nodules on her lungs and other organs. She suffers “panic attacks” whenever she is on a hill due to an experience she had when she was young. She was parked on a hill and decided to move the car, but the car rolled backwards into another car so now when she is parked on a hill, she has panic attacks. She reports that her only “phobia” is having water in her face.

Crystal graduated from high school second out of 899 students. She attended a liberal arts college in the Los Angeles area. She applied to medical school, but did not get accepted to any school. She attended UCLA school of biology where she graduated with a Master of Science in Public Health. Her area of interest is Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD). Crystal has a lengthy work history. She worked as a chemist while in school earning her Master’s degree. She held a variety of jobs including working for a university in the Geriatric Department. She worked as a Public Health Investigator, an epidemiologist, a research epidemiologist, and a statistical analysis. She currently works

as a research analyst in the division of HIV/STD program for the county in which she lives.

Randy

Randy recalls always feeling close to his family while growing up. He grew up in a religious home where there was a lot of emphasis on the Bible. His one criticism of his home growing up and even now is that the house is too messy. He blames his parents for keeping the house messy. Randy had lots of respect for his dad while growing up, but reports that he has less respect for him now. As a kid, Randy and his dad bonded over basketball, wrestling, and other games. He feels his dad was a happier person when he was young than he is now. Randy attributes it to his dad being laid off from his job. When he was working in his field, he was making good money, but when he got laid off he worked different jobs trying to figure out what he was going to do. Randy started seeing flaws in his dad at this point. He felt that his dad didn't transition into another career well. He feels his dad felt lost in life and went from a place of certainty to a place of challenges and couldn't handle it well.

According to Randy, the main tension between him and his father is their communication. Their communication styles are different and it frustrates Randy. He feels that he and his father have hurt each other by not meeting each other's expectations. Randy wishes his father would have recovered better from being laid off. He feels the layoff became too much of a central point in his father's life. Instead of his father bouncing back, he allowed it to wound him and even to this day it still wounds him. Randy says, "he lets lots of things from his past wound him because he can't get past it. He doesn't have the confidence to do what it is that he wants to do." Randy feels that his

father should be doing more now in life than he's doing. He states, "he has so much more potential to do something else, but he's allowed himself to get stuck where he's at." Randy is disappointed in his father because he feels his father has stayed in misery and in a negative spot instead of growing and looking to do better by moving on to the next thing.

Randy reports having a solid relationship with his mother. They have never had a falling out. They understand each other. He and his mom are very much alike. He feels he has her flaws like poor time management. Randy finds it easier to talk to his mother than he does to his father. He says his mom is easy to take for granted and he has taken her for granted at times, but he really appreciates her a lot. He's proud that she works hard and has bettered herself through education.

Randy feels he and Brenda have a close relationship, but when they fight, they really fight. He considers her to be one of his best friends ever. He feels they can talk about anything. He feels she is very intelligent and very eloquent in her speech, and he wishes he could be more like her in that respect. Randy feels that his going off to college impacted their relationship in a negative way. Brenda had problems in school as a result of not having her brother around to support her. Another riff between them has been how their maternal grandparents treated them. He believes that Brenda feels that their grandparents treated Randy better than her.

Brenda

Brenda recalls her family's religious beliefs as being the major influence in her home. Brenda feels she grew up in a normal family. She feels that way because she has always been able to have open discussions about basically anything. The mood in her

home was mostly happy and affectionate. When she was young, both of her parents were very affectionate; but as she got older, her mom was more affectionate than her dad.

Brenda feels that her father changed once he lost his job. She recalls that when he was working as a packaging engineer, he was more of an outgoing person and more of a family man. He would come home from work and join the family in the living room for activities that included watching television together. When he lost his job, he lost his confidence and became isolated. He no longer joined the family in the living room for family time. When he came home from work, he would go straight to his room and spend the rest of the time isolated. Brenda grew up not feeling cared for or protected by her dad.

Brenda has a good relationship with her mother, but she does feel that her mother favors her brother more. She attributes this possibly to the fact that her mother had several miscarriages before finally having a successful pregnancy that resulted in her brother. Brenda feels very close to her brother. They grew up always playing together. They shared a room together when they were younger and a bathroom together so having to share space gave them a close relationship. When her brother moved out of the home to attend college, it had a negative impact on Brenda. She was left at home alone daily for many hours. As a result, she had trouble coping and it affected her grades at school.

The remaining sections of this chapter will provide information for Wayne and Crystal only since couple therapy was the treatment used for this case study.

Mental Status

Appearance and Behavior

Wayne is around 5'10 in height. Pictures reveal that he was much lighter in his younger years, but his weight has increased as he has aged. He wears a bald head and his only facial hair is a mustache. Wayne can best be described as being "big solid" rather than "big obese." Crystal is around 5'6 in height. Her weight is average for her height. She does not wear makeup or much jewelry. She can best be described as having a conservative appearance.

During therapy sessions, Wayne was dressed casual and relaxed. He was always well groomed. He appeared to be poised in the beginning sessions, but near the end he inquired more about how much longer the sessions would go on. Wayne has a deep tenor voice. When he speaks, he is easily heard. He seemed to have no trouble speaking when it was his turn, and he only spoke when called upon to speak. When it was his turn to speak, he often needed coaching from his wife to include significant details. He engaged in eye contact periodically as he spoke with the therapist. When it came to listening to his wife speak, Wayne listened without interrupting much. Occasionally he would say a sarcastic word or two as she spoke, but that was on rare occasions. He would rarely look at his wife while listening to her speak. The majority of the time as he listened to his wife speak, he would look straight ahead.

Crystal was also dressed casual and relaxed. She too was always well groomed. She seemed to be very calm during therapy sessions. The sessions seemed to be very therapeutic for her. Crystal has a very soft voice and at times it can be difficult to hear her. She spoke with confidence not only about her background, but also her husband's

background. She seemed to know more about her husband's family history and personal history than he did himself. Whereas when her husband shared his background he was more serious when he talked, Crystal was much more engaging as she talked. When she spoke, she smiled, laughed, and seemed to really enjoy telling her story. She was very concerned with getting her story right and including all the details; whereas her husband spoke in more general terms and needed his wife and coaching from the therapist to pull the details out of him. As Crystal listened to her husband speak, she was very attentive to him. She kept her eyes on him most of the time, and helped him with details that he left out which she felt was important and needed to be told. In her providing help, she was not disruptive nor did she take over her husband's speaking time.

Wayne and Crystal were both able to express themselves. Wayne seemed to be more anxious about sharing his story than Crystal. There was a lot of hurt and pain in Wayne's background, but he kept his poise as he shared his story. He had to really think about how to tell his story, and how to express his feelings. It was obvious that he had never really talked openly about his family history with others besides his wife. It was also obvious that he is still wrestling with feelings from his childhood. Despite the challenge of sharing his story, Wayne interacted very well with the therapist. When he was pushed by the therapist to deal with the emotions he feels as a result of his childhood, he did not back away; instead, he did his best to articulate how he honestly felt.

Crystal's story was not as emotional and painful as her husband's story. She was very relaxed as she shared her story; therefore, it flowed smoothly like she had told it several times before. She interacted well with the therapist and required no pushing to share her feelings or any part of her story.

Cognitive Functioning

Cognitively Wayne was not as sharp as his wife. His thoughts came to him a little slower. As various topics pertaining to his family and personal history were discussed, he would chuckle at the start of a new topic and then say, “I’m not sure what to say about...” With a little help getting started from the therapist or his wife, he was able then to openly discuss the topic. His thinking seemed to be more in general terms. He gave a general outline of his story and the details came when his wife would ask him about sharing details he had left out. His vocabulary was good, and overall, he expressed himself well. He did a great job with sharing his story which had emotional content. He kept his composure throughout even as he wrestled with feelings as he told the story. It takes Wayne a minute or two to piece together detailed information that he receives. As the therapist responded to him with feedback, Wayne would often say he needed time to process what he had heard. His memory seemed to be good as he remembered events that took place at a young age, but once again he shared the events in general terms rather than with details.

Crystal displayed sharp thinking. She is very organized with her thoughts and presentation of her story. She was able to recall events with specific details which demonstrated her strong memory. She responded to feedback from the therapist well. One thing that stands out in her story is her perception of reality. As a child, she thought adults were her playmates and, therefore, had trouble relating to her peers. She had a vivid imagination and lived in a fantasy world throughout most of her childhood. She is still challenged by her perception of reality when it comes to her children. Her husband has pointed out the need for their adult children to be treated as adults and given

expectations of adults since they still live at home. Crystal sees things differently and seems to focus on the reasons why their adult children who still live at home cannot be held to adult expectations such as helping out around the house. Both Wayne and Crystal demonstrate a normal learning capacity based on their education history and the fact that both of them, despite being in their early 60's, are currently taking continuing education courses.

Affective

Wayne and Crystal are individuals who care about the feelings and overall well-being of others. They are Christian people who seek to live out the Christian concept of love for their neighbor. During the sessions, they both displayed a friendly and pleasant attitude. As the sessions progressed, Wayne seemed to look forward to them ending while Crystal seemed as though she could continue as long as needed.

Of concern is Wayne's affect toward his wife. Crystal reported that when he is at home, Wayne spends the majority of his time in their bedroom while she and the children spend time together in the living room watching T.V. or playing games. She expressed that she would like to have Wayne become more involved with her and the children. She also reports a lack of affection from Wayne. She would like for him to be more affectionate and understanding towards her.

Wayne also has strong feelings about his adult children still living at home. He is ready for them to move out and start a life on their own. He says he feels this way for two reasons: First, he wants to have his wife to himself once again. Both Wayne and Crystal agree that things changed for them when they had children. Second, he wants to

have a clean and orderly home which he believes will not happen as long as his children are at home.

Crystal feels that the children should stay at home for as long as they need to. She is much more patient and does not want to push them out before they are ready. In response to Crystal's feelings about the children being home, Wayne says he would not mind them being at home for as long as they need if they showed more appreciation for the sacrifice that has been made for them by their parents. He feels that his children take for granted all the hard work their parents have done in order to give them a good life. Wayne understands the sacrifice that was made for him by his grandparents and it caused him to respond a certain way, but he does not see his children having that same recognition and gratitude when it comes to their parents. There is frustration on both Wayne and Crystal's part when it comes to their children and respecting one another's feelings about their children.

Orientation

Wayne and Crystal were always punctual when it came to the sessions. They were fully aware of the days, month, year, place and purpose for the sessions. Their main social activity is attending church each week. Wayne serves as a local elder. He is the top ranking elder at the church so his duties include running the church in the absence of the Pastor. He has several elders under him that he leads. Crystal is involved in several ministries at the church. She is part of the praise team, and she is the assistant women's ministry leader. Wayne and Crystal are the co-leaders of the family ministries team. Each week after service, they traditionally have dinner at Crystal's parents' home. Her parents also attend the same church. This has become a time of weekly family fellowship

not only with immediate family, but also with members of their church family who they invite to attend.

Suicidal or Homicidal Ideation?

Neither Wayne or Crystal report having any suicidal or homicidal ideation. Their belief and faith in God helps them deal with the many stressors of life that they continually face.

Assessment

A genogram was created for Wayne and Crystal that covers three generations. It is located in the Appendix.

Case Formulation

Wayne and Crystal are an African-American couple. Wayne is 63 years-old and Crystal is 61 years-old. They have been married for 38 years. They have two adult children – a son who is 28 years-old and a daughter who is 25 years-old. This is a family that has many attachment issues.

Wayne was never raised by his biological mother or father. He reports struggling with trying to understand how his mother would not come and get her child once she finished school, got married, and settled into her home. His mother had two children with her husband, and both of them grew up in the home with their mother which left Wayne feeling rejected by his biological mother. Wayne reports being frustrated with his father because they did not have a father-son relationship. He recalls a time when he overheard his father denying to friends that Wayne was his son; yet, his father raised a step daughter which left Wayne feeling rejected by his biological father. This cycle of rejection for Wayne continues in his marriage to Crystal. When Wayne asks Crystal to

make sure the house is clean, but she responds by refusing to clean the house, Wayne experiences rejection again. Just as he was rejected by his biological mother and father, Wayne is now being rejected by his wife. In response to her rejection, Wayne isolates himself and withholds affection from Crystal, although he does not seem to be aware that rejection plays a part in his isolation and lack of affection toward Crystal.

Wayne was raised by his maternal grandparents. Based on attachment theory, which focuses on the caregiver-infant relationship, Wayne had a secure attachment to his grandmother. He reports that while growing up, he felt close to his grandmother and wherever his grandmother went, he went also. This represents the first two characteristics of an attachment relationship – proximity or closeness to the caregiver is sought, and the caregiver provides a safe haven (Clinton and Sibcy, 2002). Wayne also reports that he was better off being raised by his grandparents because they provided a level of stability for him. This represents the third characteristic of an attachment relationship – the caregiver provides a secure base (Clinton and Sibcy, 2002). Both of Wayne's grandparents are now deceased. To maintain his connection to them, he desires for his current home to be cleaned by his wife and children using the same routine from his childhood. He reports that a clean house reminds him of his roots at his grandmother's house which he associates with stability; and he fears losing his connection to his roots. This represents the fourth and fifth characteristics of an attachment relationship – any threat of separation induces fear and anxiety, and loss of the caregiver causes grief and sorrow (Clinton and Sibcy, 2002).

Crystal grew up experiencing rejection in her family of origin. She had a younger brother who was born with severe cerebral palsy. Crystal's mother spent the majority of

her time taking care of Crystal's younger brother. As a result, Crystal did not form a secure attachment to her mother. She reports that her mother called her a "dumb little child." Crystal had a closer relationship with her father than with her mother. Her father would drink alcohol Monday through Saturday; therefore, Crystal only had one day of the week where she could spend time with a "sober" father. Crystal's lack of attention from her parents was replaced by attention from her aunt who came to live with Crystal and her family. Crystal developed an attachment to her aunt who took her everywhere and, basically, acted as her primary caregiver. Crystal reports that she felt like she was her aunt's daughter, and unlike her mother, her aunt made her feel valued. Unfortunately, Crystal lost the attachment to her aunt when her aunt got married and moved out of Crystal's home. Having lost her attachment figure, Crystal sought her attachment needs from others such as teachers who she believed were her friends.

In her relationship with Wayne, Crystal continues to live out the fantasies from her childhood. She grew up believing that she was a "princess" and, therefore, she was never required to do any housecleaning. When Wayne asks her to do housecleaning, she refuses on the basis that she never had to do housecleaning as a child because she was a "princess." She does not seem to realize that by refusing Wayne's request for a clean house, she is giving him the message that she does not have time to care for him just like her parents did not have time to care for her because of her younger brother. Crystal also grew up believing that all adults were her playmates. This fantasy continues in the form of the relationship she has with her children. The three of them have formed a triangle which is a three-person relationship (Nichols, 2013). This relationship not only provides Crystal with "playmates" (She and the children spend family time together watching

movies and playing games), but it also provides her with a stable relationship system which was missing in her childhood. Instead of Wayne meeting Crystal's attachment needs, it seems that her children are meeting them. As a result of Crystal's enmeshment with her children, they seem unprepared to establish independence outside of their parent's household even though they are both working adults.

Wayne and Crystal are in a dance that leaves Wayne feeling: (1) rejected by Crystal just like he was rejected by his biological parents; and (2) fearful of losing his connection to his roots which provide him with a sense of security. As a result, Wayne isolates himself and demonstrates a lack of affection towards Crystal. The dance leaves Crystal feeling disconnected emotionally because she is not being treated like the "princess" that she believes herself to be. As a result, Crystal rejects Wayne's need for security through housecleaning, and meets her own emotional need through a triangle relationship with her children.

The therapist should consider creating a genogram for this family. It will help the therapist to better understand the relationship dynamics among family members such as close relationships, conflict, estrangement, distance relationships, triangles, significant dates and events among other things (Nichols, 2013). It is recommended that Wayne and Crystal receive couple therapy using Emotionally Focused Therapy. It is a short-term therapy, usually 8-20 sessions. This therapy will allow Wayne and Crystal to explore their emotions and attachments. They will go through three stages that involve nine steps which will help them to identify negative cycles in their relationship and create new cycles which will help them to reconnect or promote bonding. Through the use of EFT,

the therapist will seek to reassign Crystal's relationship priority from the triangle relationship with her children to a securely attached relationship with Wayne.

Clinical Impressions

Z63.0 Relationship Distress with Spouse or Intimate Partner.

CHAPTER 5

THERAPY AND OUTCOMES

Wayne, Crystal, Randy, and Brenda all agreed to participate in therapy sessions. This chapter will describe couple therapy sessions with Wayne and Crystal and family therapy sessions with Wayne, Crystal, Randy, and Brenda. Outcomes will be discussed following the description of the therapy sessions.

Couple Therapy

Attachment theory helps explain how even healthy adults need to depend on each other; therefore, it has been a successful approach to couple therapy (Nichols, 2013). Emotionally focused therapy (EFT) uses attachment theory to establish emotional security between couples whose attachment bond has been disrupted.

Using EFT, Wayne and Crystal will accomplish the following goals: (1) They will be able to identify the negative patterns of interaction in their relationship that have caused them to disconnect; (2) They will become aware of the triggers that lead to defensive actions; (3) They will develop new patterns of interaction based on their understanding of their old negative patterns and triggers; and (4) They will form a secure emotional bond that will result in the reestablishment of their attachment relationship. The key moments of change in EFT are moments of secure bonding. Johnson and Sanderfer (2016) state, “In these moments of safe attunement and connection, both partners can hear each other’s attachment cry and respond with soothing care, forging a bond that can withstand differences, wounds, and the test of time” (p. 58).

EFT is a short-term therapy that usually has 8-20 sessions. There are three stages that involve nine steps as follows:

- Stage 1: Stabilization.

- Step 1: Identify the relational conflict issues between the partners.
- Step 2: Identify the negative interaction cycle where these issues are expressed.
- Step 3: Access attachment emotions underlying the position each partner takes in this cycle.
- Step 4: Reframe the problem in terms of the cycle, unacknowledged emotions, and attachment needs.
- Stage 2: Restructuring the bond.
 - Step 5: Access disowned or implicit needs, emotions, and models of self.
 - Step 6: Promote each partner's acceptance of the other's experience.
 - Step 7: Facilitate each partner's expression of needs and wants to restructure the interaction based on new understandings and create bonding events.
- Stage 3: Integration and consolidation.
 - Step 8: Facilitate the formulation of new stories and new solutions to old problems.
 - Step 9: Consolidate new cycles of behavior.

Johnson and Sanderfer (2016) offer a version of EFT for couples that is based on seven conversations that are aimed at encouraging a special kind of emotional responsiveness that is the key to lasting love for couples. The seven transforming conversations are as follows:

- Conversation 1: Recognizing the Demon Dialogues.
- Conversation 2: Finding the Raw Spots.

- Conversation 3: Revisiting a Rocky Moment.
- Conversation 4: Hold Me Tight – Engaging and Connecting.
- Conversation 5: Forgiving Injuries.
- Conversation 6: Bonding Through Sex and Touch.
- Conversation 7: Keeping Love Alive.

Wayne and Crystal will participate in seven sessions which will cover the seven conversations listed above.

Initial Assessment

Prior to starting therapy sessions, the therapist met with Wayne and Crystal for an initial assessment. The therapist's goals for the initial assessment were as follows:

1. To create an alliance with Wayne and Crystal where they both feel safe and accepted by the therapist and confident that they will be helped by the therapy sessions.
2. To assess the nature of the problem and the relationship.
3. To assess Wayne and Crystal's goals for therapy which are: (1) better communication; and (2) better execution of household activities such as housecleaning.
4. To create a therapeutic agreement between the couple and the therapist including how therapy will be conducted.

The meeting began with the therapist thanking Wayne and Crystal for agreeing to participate in couple therapy sessions. The day and time for future sessions was agreed upon by all parties. The therapist explained to Wayne and Crystal that the type of therapy they would be receiving is called Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy. An

overview of the seven conversations was given to them and any questions they had were answered. Wayne and Crystal agreed to participate in couple therapy sessions in order for this author to fulfill the requirements for the Doctor of Ministry program; therefore, outside of use for this thesis-project, information from the therapy sessions would be confidential.

Wayne and Crystal were each asked to share their goals for therapy. Wayne thinks his wife does not understand him; therefore, his goal was for her to understand him better. Crystal's goals were: (1) to reduce or eliminate the nagging and isolation she gets from her husband; and (2) to get more affection from her husband. Wayne and Crystal gave a joint goal of both wanting to just relax when they get home from work. Wayne and Crystal were also asked to share what each of them feels is the problem in the relationship. Wayne defined the problem as his wife and children not making housework a top priority. Crystal defined the problem as her husband's frequent nagging and isolation from her and the children.

Conversation 1: Recognizing the Demon Dialogues

The goal of this session was to identify Wayne and Crystal's negative pattern of interaction, specifically the pattern that is causing the issue in their relationship. Johnson and Sanderfer (2016) list three patterns of demon dialogues that block couples from safely connecting with each other. The first is called "Find the Bad Guy" which is a pattern of mutual blame that drives the couple into separate space far from one another. It is also described as an attack-attack pattern. The second is called "the Protest Polka" which is the most common dance of relationship distress. One partner usually pursues, frequently using demands or criticism to make his or her point; while the other partner

tries to defend him or herself, but soon gets overwhelmed and begins to shut down and withdraw. It is also described as a demand-withdraw pattern. The third is called “Freeze and Flee” which happens when both partner feel helpless. Neither is reaching for the other, neither is taking any risks, and both has run for cover. It is also described as a withdraw-withdraw pattern.

Wayne began explaining the negative pattern of interaction. He reports that he goes to work for eight hours on Sunday while his wife and children are at home. Yet when he returns home from work, no housework has been done. He feels his wife should do weekly housecleaning on Sunday since she does not have to work on Sunday. In his family of origin, Sunday was designated as cleanup day, and he feels it should be the same with his new family - his wife and children. Wayne places the blame on his wife having children which he says took away her time to make housework a priority. He wants his wife to be the aggressor when it comes to making his children do housecleaning because that is what his grandmother did with him and his brother. Wayne states that he nags frequently because his wife does not do housework. He denies that his isolation from his wife and children is connected to her not doing housework. Instead, he claims that after an intense day at work, he comes home and wants to relax, but he cannot relax when his family is watching intense programs or movies on T.V. What helps him to relax is comedy shows; therefore, he isolates himself in order to relax.

Crystal explained that while Wayne is at work on Sunday, she and the children have family time. In her family of origin, Sunday was the day to sleep in and was also designated as family day. She continues to view Sunday as a day to rest and spend time with family. Crystal was the princess in her family of origin and, therefore, she did not

have to do any housecleaning while growing up. She attributes this to her lack of desire to do housecleaning as an adult. Since her husband grew up cleaning the house every Sunday in his family of origin, she feels that he should clean the house himself or allow her to hire someone to clean the house on a regular basis. Wayne refuses both options which leaves Crystal feeling that he should not nag and complain since he has refused her alternative options. She disagrees with Wayne concerning the reason for his isolation. According to Crystal, Wayne began isolating himself when their children returned home from college.

With the help of the therapist, Wayne and Crystal identified the existence of two demon dialogues in their interaction with one another. Their first negative pattern is “Find the Bad Guy.” Wayne attacks Crystal by blaming her for not making housework a top priority. In return, Crystal attacks Wayne by blaming him for constantly nagging and isolating himself from her. As explained by Johnson and Sanderfer (2016), this pattern of attack-attack is hard to maintain over an extended period of time; therefore, couples move into the second demon dialogue pattern of the “Protest Polka.” Wayne and Crystal are doing the “Protest Polka” dance. Wayne demands that his wife do housecleaning on Sunday while he is at work. In response to his demand, Crystal defends herself by saying Sunday is her rest day and family day; furthermore, she does not enjoy doing housecleaning. Since Wayne has refused her alternative options for keeping the house clean, Crystal withdraws and seeks no resolution for their conflict.

Conversation 2: Finding the Raw Spots

According to Johnson and Sanderfer (2016), all of us have what they call a raw spot on our emotional skin. This raw spot is tender to the touch, easily rubbed, and

deeply painful. When our raw spot is scraped, it can bleed all over our relationship causing us to lose our emotional balance and plunge into demon dialogues. They define a raw spot as “a hypersensitivity formed by moments in a person’s past or current relationships when an attachment need has been repeatedly neglected, ignored, or dismissed, resulting in a person’s feeling what I call the “2 Ds” – emotionally deprived or deserted” (pp.109-110).

The goals in this session was for Wayne and Crystal to: (1) identify their raw spot; (2) find the source behind their raw spot; and (3) recognize when their raw spot is rubbed. They both felt comfortable with the conversation and did not shy away from sharing the emotional content of the source behind their raw spot. Crystal was able to share her story with Wayne without any assistance. Wayne had no trouble identifying his raw spot, but when it came to discussing the source, Crystal provided the coaching based on stories and feelings that Wayne had shared with her.

Wayne identified his raw spot as his relationship with his biological parents. His biological mother had a second son and a daughter by her husband. Wayne’s brother and sister were raised in the home with their mother. This is a raw spot for Wayne because he does not understand why his mother never came back for him. Wayne never had a father-son relationship with his biological father; yet his father raised a stepdaughter. Wayne struggled to understand how his father could raise a child that was not his flesh and blood while neglecting the child that is his own flesh and blood. Wayne feels his dad was satisfied with allowing another man to take care of his responsibility. He recounted the time when he visited his father and he overheard his father joking with some friends

about whether or not Wayne was really his son. This is a raw spot for Wayne because he felt rejected by his father.

Wayne feels that clutter is what causes his raw spot to bleed. He associates clutter with the disorganized or cluttered life of his biological parents. His grandparents who raised him provided the only stability in his life while growing up. His grandmother required a clean living environment as well. Therefore, Wayne feels emotionally stable and connected to his grandparents when his house is clean. On the other hand, when his house is not clean, he feels a loss of connection with his grandparents and more of an association with the disorganized relationships and homes of his biological parents. He also experiences rejection from Crystal like he did from his biological parents.

Crystal identified her raw spot as her children. She grew up in a home where she lost both of her brothers. When she and Wayne attempted to have children, she lost her first two through miscarriages. When she had a successful pregnancy and her son was born, she considered him to be her miracle child. She was then blessed to have a second child. Yet, having children changed the relationship between her and Wayne. Now that the children are adults, Wayne seems eager for them to leave the house, while Crystal is more patient and wants them to leave the house when they feel emotionally and financially ready. What causes her raw spot to bleed is: (1) when Wayne isolates himself from her and the children; and (2) his impatience with the children leaving home. Crystal feels torn between having to choose between spending time with Wayne or spending time with her children.

Conversation 3: Revisiting a Rocky Moment

The goal in this session was for Wayne and Crystal to revisit a rocky moment in their relationship and apply what they have learned from Conversations 1 and 2 about the way they communicate and their attachment fears. The therapist asked questions along the way to guide them through the process and help them with conflict resolution. They chose to revisit a time when Wayne went to pick up one of his students at the student's home. As Wayne waited for the student, he noticed how clean and orderly the home was and it made him feel good. When he got home after work and entered his own home, it was not clean like his student's home and it made Wayne feel angry. He proceeded to make a few sarcastic remarks to Crystal about the use of her time throughout the day. Crystal chose to ignore his remarks and ignore Wayne as well for a significant portion of time afterwards.

When asked by the therapist how he could have handled his anger differently, Wayne stated he could have remained silent. The therapist suggested to Wayne that he could have explained to Crystal that he went inside a student's home and how it made him feel to see the home clean. He could then have expressed to her that the feeling he got when he entered his student's home is the same feeling he wishes to feel when he enters his own home. Instead of ignoring Wayne's sarcastic remarks, Crystal stated she could have told him how his remarks made her feel. She could have shared with him how she spent her time while he was at work. Both Wayne and Crystal recognized that their raw spot had been scraped during that particular incident and that's why they each reacted the way they did. They showed an awareness of the importance of discussing their feelings in order to avoid falling into their demon dialogue.

Conversation 4: Hold Me Tight – Engaging and Connecting

In this session, Wayne and Crystal had to share with each other the answer to two questions: (1) What am I most afraid of? (2) What do I need most from you? The goal was for Wayne and Crystal to openly and coherently speak their needs to each other in a way that invites the other into a new dialogue marked by accessibility, responsiveness, and engagement.

Wayne expressed to Crystal that his greatest fear is losing his roots. When he walks into a house that is unclean, he feels frustrated, angry, but mainly a loss of control. He admitted that an unclean house makes him feel like he can't get back to his roots. When pressed by Crystal to elaborate, Wayne declared that cleaning is the only thing he has left of his grandparents who are now deceased and of his childhood. What he needs most from Crystal is for her to provide him a stable environment, like his grandmother did, by keeping the house clean. He wants her to gather the family together on Sunday since it is the day that her and the children are home from work. He wants her to hand out assignments to everyone like his grandmother did. He wants to return home from work on Sunday to a clean house because that was the way it was done in his family of origin.

Crystal expressed to Wayne that her greatest fear is becoming emotionally numb. She explained that her tolerance for his nagging has decreased down through the years. As a result, she has become less emotional about his nagging. At this point in their relationship, she just wants to make it stop. She declared that she feels like she cannot live up to Wayne's expectations. When he begins to nag, she snaps back with a comment and then withdraws from him. She does not seek to resolve the conflict because it is too

painful for her. When asked by the therapist to elaborate on her painful feeling, Crystal shared that it is painful that Wayne does not notice what she does do. He chooses to focus on what she has not done. Therefore, she goes into protective mode and withdraws.

What Crystal needs most from her husband is help with the cleaning and an emotional connection with him. She explained that in her family of origin, her father did the housecleaning. She never had to do any cleaning while growing up. She feels that Wayne should do the housecleaning like her father did, and especially because he is the best at doing it in the house since he grew up having to do housecleaning on a regular basis unlike her. She expressed to him that she is more than willing to help him clean. If he is not happy with that option, she suggested Wayne allow her to hire someone to clean their house. She acknowledged that she is aware that he does not want to hire someone to clean because his grandmother had to clean other people's toilets, but she assured him that she would not ask the cleaning person to clean their toilets.

This session was an eye opener for Crystal because she finally understood that her husband wants her to be like his grandmother. Although she understands what he wants, she also understands that she cannot be like his grandmother. She admits that the best she can do is offer to make sure the house is clean, but in order to do so, Wayne must allow her to use the method that works best for her including hiring a cleaning person. She suggested to her husband that he play the role of his grandmother by handing out assignments to the family, and she is more than willing to do her part. Wayne did not seem satisfied with any of the options presented by Crystal. The therapist believes the reason for Wayne's dissatisfaction is because what he truly wants from Crystal is the same connection that he experienced with his grandmother. In other words, his request

for a clean house is really a request for Crystal to be his attachment figure. Wayne acknowledged his understanding of her fear and needs, and declared that he would have to get better at handling the situation. He recognized that their differences are a result of their experience in their family of origin.

Conversation 5: Forgiving Injuries

“What partners need is a special type of healing conversation that fosters not just forgiveness, but the willingness to trust again. Renewed trust is the ultimate goal” (Johnson and Sanderfer, 2016, p. 187). In this session Wayne and Crystal were encouraged to speak openly to each other about any pain or injury that the other has caused in the relationship. While the injured partner is speaking, the injuring partner must acknowledge the injured partner’s pain and accept responsibility for his or her part in causing the injury.

Both Wayne and Crystal agreed that they had no real injuries to discuss. Rather than injuries, they both were feeling frustration. They admit that conversation 4 and their reflecting on the session afterwards had really helped them to reconnect because they now understand that neither has been seeking to cause personal injury, but rather their actions are a result of family of origin influences.

Conversation 6: Bonding Through Sex and Touch

The goal of this session was to promote a practical approach for maintaining an emotional connection. According to Johnson and Sanderfer (2016), emotional connection creates great sex, and great sex creates deeper emotional connection. When Crystal spoke to her husband about her needs, one of the things she mentioned was needing more affection from him. She expressed that she would like to receive more

kisses and affectionate touching. The therapist talked to Wayne and Crystal about “the five love languages” one of which is physical touch. The couple was encouraged to read the book, by the same name, together to discover their love language and then begin speaking in each other’s love language.

Crystal did the majority of talking in this session as she expressed her need for more physical contact from her husband. Together they developed an action plan for bonding through sex and touch. Wayne agreed to initiate more hugging throughout the day. They agreed to share kisses before leaving their home for work and when they return home from work. To promote a healthier sex life, they agreed to have a weekly date night that would allow them to get close in the evening and finish off the night even closer.

Conversation 7: Keeping Your Love Alive

The goal of this last session is for Wayne and Crystal to discuss ways to take their love into the future. Johnson and Sanderfer (2016) state that love is a constant process of seeking and losing emotional connection, and reaching out to find it again. Wayne and Crystal agreed to have a family conversation in order to talk with their children about keeping the house clean. They would like to implement a system where chores are divided among every member of the house. The children are like Crystal in that they do not like to do cleaning. Crystal took responsibility for never making cleaning a priority with her children while they were growing up; therefore, she will take the initiative to stress the importance of cleaning the home. This will help Wayne to feel more relaxed and comfortable in his own home.

Crystal asked that Wayne would make an effort to spend more time with the family instead of isolating himself. Wayne acknowledged that he would make that effort. This will provide more bonding time for Wayne and Crystal. As determined in conversation 6, they would implement a weekly date night to promote a healthier sex life. Wayne would also be more intentional about showing affection to Crystal through hugging, kisses, and random physical touch.

Family Therapy

When a family experiences any stressful event that may strain the family relationship, such as financial hardship, divorce, or the death of a loved one, the family can benefit from therapy. Family therapy, also known as family counseling, can be effective in treating mental health concerns that impact the family as a whole, such as depression, substance abuse, chronic illness, or eating disorders. Other family issues, such as communication problems, interpersonal conflict, or behavioral problems in children and adolescents can also be treated with family therapy.

A structural family therapy approach was used with Wayne, Crystal, Randy, and Brenda. The goal was to assess the structure and communication within the family and, thus, resolve any flaws in family structure and communication that might be preventing the family from doing housecleaning. The family participated in two sessions. The first session addressed the issue of housecleaning. The second session addressed the issue of Wayne's isolation from the rest of the family. Each family member was asked the same question about his or her perceptions of the same issue. By hearing from each family member, the therapist was able to explore more deeply each family member's perception and feelings without being confrontational.

Session 1

The session began with the therapist explaining to the family how the therapy session would be conducted. The therapist shared with the family that the house being unclean was a common theme discussed with the therapist by each member of the family; therefore, the first session would address this family issue. The therapist asked each member of the family to answer the following question: What do you see as the problem for the family with keeping the house clean?

Randy felt that the problem is they have no system for a cleaning time. They only clean the house when someone is coming over and even then, it is not a thorough cleaning. He stated that the house has too much stuff citing the garage as an example. They have not been able to pull their cars into the garage for years due to it becoming the storage location for all the things his family refuses to discard. He claimed to be the one in the family who does the most purging. The rest of the family agreed with his claim. Randy does not feel that cleaning on Sunday is a solution to the problem. He thinks it is unfair for his dad to expect the house to be cleaned by Crystal, Brenda, and Randy while he is working and does not participate in the cleaning.

According to Brenda, the amount of pressure to clean the house does not match the praise given when cleaning does happen. She explained that she grew up in the house always under pressure from her dad to clean. As an adult still living in the house, she has become numb to his pressure and, therefore, has no desire to clean. Brenda feels that it is difficult for everyone in the house to throw things away except for Randy. She shared how recently she did some cleaning in her room and had a large bag full of items to throw away. Upon seeing the bag, Crystal went through it and took out several items to keep.

Brenda admits that even when they are trying to throw things away, it does not seem to happen because the items are always rescued from the garbage bin. She also thinks it is unfair for her dad to ask others to clean while he does not participate himself.

Crystal cites a lack of discipline as the reason why cleaning does not get done. She argues that everyone does not do what they can to keep the house clean. As for herself, she admits that it takes her too long to clean because she was never taught to do it while growing up. She, in turn, did not make cleaning a priority for her children while they were growing up; therefore, she accepts full responsibility for Randy and Brenda not being disciplined enough to do housecleaning. Crystal agrees with Randy and Brenda that it is not fair for Wayne to not be present on the day the family does housecleaning especially since he is the one who is the best at it in the house.

Wayne feels the problem is a breakdown in transmitting to the children the importance and priority of doing housecleaning. He explained that in his family of origin, they did not have conversations about cleaning the house. Instead, they were assigned their chores and from there, they did them. He does not understand why his wife and children have to spend time talking about cleaning when they should just be able to do it. He talked about a recent project that he completed which was remodeling Randy and Brenda's bathroom. He stated that he did the work with his children in mind because he wanted to make it easier for them to clean their bathroom. Brenda responded by thanking him for the work he did, but she explained to him that remodeling the bathroom created more problems with cleaning it because of the type of material he used.

After hearing each member of the family give their perspective, the therapist moved the conversation in the direction of a solution. Brenda was the first to offer a

solution. She suggested that each person be assigned an area of the house to clean. Each person would be responsible for making sure his or her area stays clean. Randy disagreed with Brenda's suggested solution because he felt that before they can focus on an area to clean, they first needed to do a complete cleaning of the house to eliminate excessive things. Crystal agreed with Brenda's suggestion but added that a time restriction needed to be included. In other words, each person must clean his or her area daily or weekly or monthly. Crystal further suggested that Wayne teach them the art of cleaning and provide a system for them since he has the most experience with cleaning. Wayne also agreed with Brenda's solution and with Crystal's suggestion.

Randy was the lone holdout on the solution offered by Brenda. To help unify the family, the therapist suggested they schedule a cleanup weekend where the purpose would be to do a general cleaning that would result in purging excessive things as suggested by Randy. After the general cleaning, they can assign each member of the family an area to keep clean on a regular basis as suggested by Brenda. At that time, they would also decide if cleaning one's area would be done on a weekly basis or some other duration as suggested by Crystal. Wayne would be responsible for developing the system that the family follows for both the general cleaning and maintenance cleaning of their area. All members of the family agreed to the suggestion.

Session 2

The therapist shared with the family that Wayne's isolation was another common theme discussed with the therapist by each member of the family; therefore, the second session would address this family issue. The therapist asked Crystal, Randy, and Brenda to answer the following question: How do you feel about your dad or husband isolating

himself? Before, they provided their answer, the therapist invited Wayne to explain his reason for the isolation.

Wayne explained that when he goes to work, he spends his day driving up and down streets and freeways that are full of crazy drivers. He has been sitting in a car all day with students who are learning to drive which can cause high anxiety and high stress situations. Therefore, when he comes home, he just wants to relax and unwind. He knows that his family enjoys watching programs and movies that make it difficult for him to relax so he goes to his room to watch either sports or comedy which helps him relax.

Brenda shared that in the beginning she saw her dad's isolation as a problem, but once he explained his reason to her, she took on a different perspective. She does believe that he isolates in order to unwind and not because he does not want to be around the family. When she wants to spend time with her dad, she goes to his room and joins him with watching whatever he is watching. She admits to wishing that when she joins him, they could watch what she likes from time to time and not always watch sports or comedy. She also admits that she feels that the family has to enter into her dad's world more than he makes the effort to enter into their world.

Randy claims his dad's isolation does not bother him as much anymore. He feels the reason why it is a theme with everyone is because when everyone in the family gets upset, they go to their room except for his mother. He feels that they are mentally associating his dad being in his room as him being upset when that is not the case. Randy admits that as a working adult, he no longer has time anyway to watch television with the family so he himself is absent frequently as well.

Crystal views Wayne's isolation as a problem for several reasons. First, she explained that when she and the children are together having a discussion, Wayne sometimes walks into the family room and joins the discussion. The problem with that is he makes comments without knowing the full conversation, and, therefore, it often leads to an argument. Second, she feels he needs to be more intentional about spending time with his family. She agrees with Brenda that the family has to enter into his world more so than he making the effort to enter into their world. Third, she confessed that it makes her feel torn. She is torn because she has to choose between spending time with her husband and spending time with her children. She is also torn because she views the bedroom as the place for sleeping; and, therefore, she does not want to spend the day in the bedroom watching television.

After listening to Crystal, Randy, and Brenda share their feelings, the therapist gave Wayne the floor and asked him to respond to his family and provide a solution. Wayne acknowledged that what he heard from his family was that he needed to find a balance between spending time with his family and spending time alone to relax. He agreed to do more family activities such as going out to dinner. The therapist suggested a number of other family activities that Wayne could spend time doing with his family. Crystal, Randy, and Brenda were excited to hear Wayne commit to having more family time.

Outcomes

Couple Therapy

Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy was an effective therapy for Wayne and Crystal. The seven conversations helped them to discuss problem areas in their

relationship that they were avoiding. The change happened during conversation 4. It was during that conversation that both of them finally understood that the roots from their family of origin are deep. Crystal knew more about Wayne's background than he seemed to know about hers. Yet, knowing as much as she does about his background, it was an eye opener for her to discover that her husband wanted her to love him as his grandmother had loved him.

The strength of attachment theory is on display in this relationship. Wayne never formed an attachment with his biological mother, but he did form a strong attachment to his grandmother who served as his primary caregiver. Thus, his grandmother was his attachment figure. Wayne's grandmother was a safe haven for him, and she provided him with security. This is amplified when placed in contrast to his biological mother. While his grandmother represents safety, security, and stability, his biological mother represents the opposite. As an adult, Wayne's infant-caregiver attachment has been transferred to his romantic relationship. In this new romantic relationship, Crystal is now Wayne's attachment figure. The same secure relationship that he had with his grandmother, Wayne now looks to have with Crystal, his new attachment figure. During one of the sessions, Wayne shared that he has trouble sleeping whenever Crystal has to go out of town on business leaving him to sleep alone. This indicates that she indeed is his safe haven as well as his source of security and stability.

Both Wayne and Crystal agreed that their relationship changed once they had children. Wayne spoke often about wanting the children to leave the house now that they are working adults. Crystal, on the other hand, does not mind the children remaining at home even though they are working adults. She wants them to move out when they feel

mentally ready. When it comes to the house not being clean, Wayne blames his wife and children, but he especially emphasizes his children's lack of effort. He views their inability to keep the house clean as a lack of appreciation for the stable life that he has provided them. Wayne's focus on his children leads the therapist to wonder if Wayne subconsciously views his children as a threat to his attachment relationship with Crystal.

In the attachment relationship with his grandmother, Wayne developed internal working models that influences how he feels about a clean house, who should do the work of housecleaning, how housecleaning should be done, and when it should be done. As a result, Wayne brought into his new relationship with Crystal the expectation that when it came to cleaning the house, his new family would operate in the same fashion as his family of origin with Crystal in the role of his grandmother. Wayne's expectation has placed pressure on his wife and children for years. In reality, because his expectation is not being met, Wayne struggles to maintain a connection with his family of origin. He also experiences the rejection of his biological parents again through Crystal rejecting to clean the house.

Crystal grew up in a home where she had an insecure attachment to her mother. The only secure relationship she had while growing up came from her aunt. Unfortunately, the connection was severed when her aunt got married and moved out of Crystal's home. In her current home, Crystal's attachment needs are not being met by Wayne, but by her children. She wants to have a connection with Wayne that involves her receiving from him daily affection. During the therapy sessions, Crystal and Wayne were able to reconnect emotionally and implement a pattern of interaction that will help them maintain their emotional bond. Crystal's connection with Wayne should dissolve

the triangle relationship with her children; thus, allowing the husband-wife relationship to be the primary attachment relationship for both parties.

The therapist believes that Wayne would benefit from having individual therapy to address the feelings he still struggles with concerning his biological parents. Individual therapy will help Wayne to finally have some level of peace about his childhood allowing the wounds of abandonment and rejection to close and heal. Crystal could also benefit from individual therapy to address any unresolved issues she might have with her mother.

Family Therapy

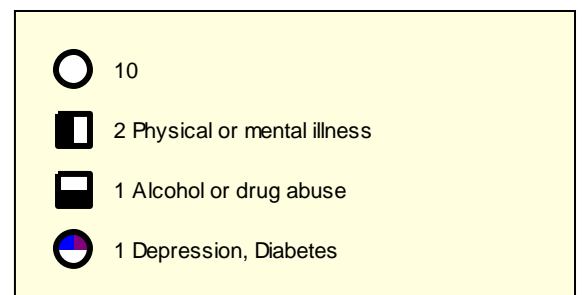
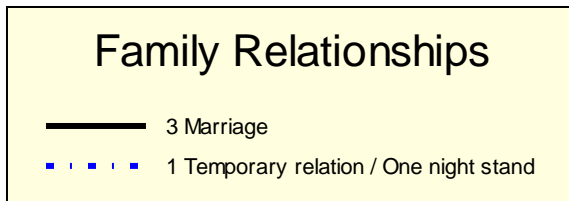
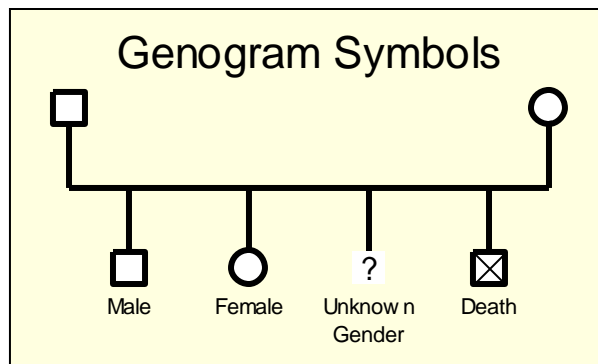
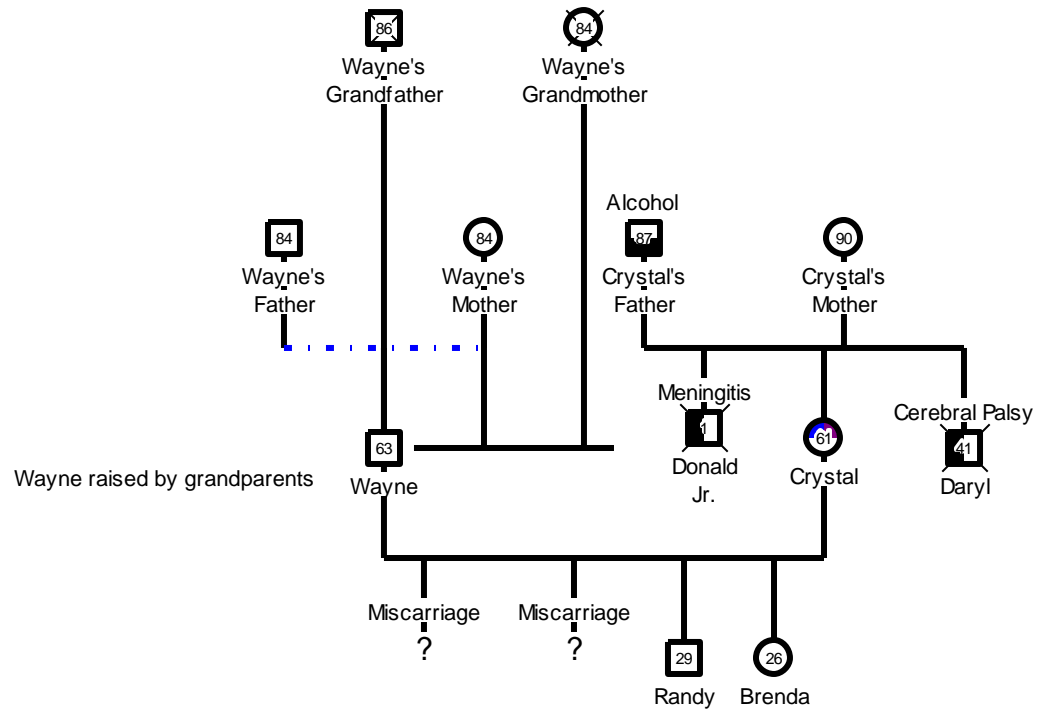
Keeping the house clean was a major issue for the family in this case study. Every member of the family admitted that it was an issue, and they really wanted help with the situation. Family therapy gave them the help that they needed. It provided an opportunity for each member of the family to be heard without backlash or criticism. With the help of the therapist, they were able to identify the breakdown in their family structure and communication pattern. In the past, this family had attempted to create a solution for their housecleaning issue, but each time they were unsuccessful. Family therapy helped them to listen to one another, and acknowledge the feelings of each family member. They also gained an understanding of expectations. As a result, barriers to communication were removed and the family was able to successfully create a solution for cleaning their house.

The discussion about Wayne's isolation was a much needed family discussion. When people fail to communicate, then assumptions are made which can be inaccurate and, thus, lead to major issues. Crystal, Randy, and Brenda needed to hear directly from

Wayne's mouth the reason why he isolates himself. Wayne needed to hear directly from his wife and children's mouth how they each feel about his isolation. Wayne's isolation affects Crystal more than it does Randy and Brenda. While the children have made their adjustment to their dad's isolation, Crystal has not found a working solution for her husband's isolation. She admitted to being torn. In couple therapy, Wayne and Crystal agreed to implement into their schedule a date night which would allow them to spend more time together for bonding. This bonding time should also help with Crystal feeling torn since it will increase the amount of time she spends with Wayne.

What stood out in the family therapy sessions was how the family looked to Wayne as their leader. They needed him to lead them in learning how to clean the house. They needed him to lead them in developing a system for cleaning the house. They needed him to lead them when it comes to family activities. From the therapist's point of view, the family therapy sessions were a cry from Wayne's family for him to lead them. Despite the constant pressure he places on them, despite the nagging, despite the challenging aspects of their relationships, despite the isolation, they still had respect for Wayne as the head of the family and wanted him to know that he is their leader, and they are willing and ready to follow his lead.

APPENDIX



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VITA

Marvin Lamar Hugley was born on February 27, 1971 in Warren, Ohio. He graduated from Warren Western Reserve High School in 1989. One month after graduating from high school, Marvin began attending DeVry University in Atlanta, Georgia. In 1992, he graduated from DeVry with a bachelor of science in computer information systems. Marvin worked as a computer programmer for 6 years before pursuing a call to ministry. In 1998, he began his ministerial studies at Oakwood University in Huntsville, Alabama. He spent one year at Oakwood taking theology courses in preparation for his seminary studies. In 1999, Marvin began his seminary studies at Andrews University Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan. He graduated from Andrews University with a Master of Divinity Degree in 2001. Marvin returned to the classroom in 2013 to pursue a Doctor of Ministry degree in marriage and family counseling. He is expected to graduate from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in May 2017.